

SWEATER GIRLS
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with neater knits

PRIDE AND PREJUDICE
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a special report

Page 3

Big boost for police in CPS shake-up

Reforms will bring more cases to court

DONALD MACINTYRE
Political Editor

The Government is planning major reforms of the Crown Prosecution Service to quell police frustration and criticism from victims over the rising number of prosecutions dropped before they reach court.

In a significant change of policy, Sir Nicholas Lyell, the Attorney General, has undertaken an internal review of the CPS's functions and is shortly to put proposals to ministers designed to improve public confidence in the agency.

Among the changes ministers will consider are: basing some CPS lawyers at major police stations; a relaxation of the "51 per cent chance of conviction" rule that the CPS uses in deciding whether to pursue cases; and giving the police a mechanism by which they can challenge CPS decisions not to pursue prosecutions.

The plans will be seen as a further sign of the Government's determination to secure its law and order platform in the run-up to the general election, and are likely to meet with the strong approval of Michael Howard, the Home Secretary.

The reforms also follow consistent pressure for several months from Jack Straw, the Shadow Home Secretary, for a full-scale review of the CPS to deal with what Mr Straw claimed in a speech to the Po-

lice Federation in May was a "crisis of confidence in the criminal justice system."

Although at official level the Association of Chief Police Officers has continued to stress its close working relationship with the CPS, there have been widespread unofficial complaints from senior and middle-ranking police officers both over the "discontinuation" of prosecutions and what they see as a tendency by the CPS to "play safe" by committing original police charges to lesser ones.

There have been complaints from police officers and victims about a CPS practice - sometimes in return for guilty pleas on the part of the defendant - to change wounding charges to the lesser one of Actual Bodily Harm and Actual Bodily Injury charges to those of Common Assault.

The Attorney General disclosed in the Commons yesterday that he was already working on plans to install Crown Prosecution lawyers in police stations to improve liaison between officers and the prosecuting authorities. Sir Nicholas said: "It is something we are thinking about very seriously indeed - the idea of placing CPS lawyers either in police stations or administrative support units or crime support units."

Such units provide the back up for police officers preparing cases for prosecution. Sir Nicholas added: "Close working relations between police and the Crown Prosecution

Service are of the essence of fair and efficient prosecution."

But Sir Nicholas's plan to improve liaison between police and prosecutors is only part of a wider ranging package of reforms which include a greater flexibility in applying the rigid tests by which the CPS decides that it has a better than even chance of securing conviction before a case goes to court.

At the same time, he is understood to be working on proposals to allow a "second look" after the CPS has decided to drop a particular prosecution because it judges that it does not have a sufficient chance of success in court.

This would allow the police an effective right of appeal in cases in which it believed that a prosecution was fully in the public interest.

In his May speech to the Police Federation Mr Straw proposed a series of changes to the CPS to take account of the fact that by 1993 the total number of offences had more than doubled to over 5.5 million but the number of people cautioned or convicted had fallen from 556,000 in 1980 to 517,000.

Mr Straw said last night: "This is a major change of heart by the government in response to public criticism and to Labour's proposal. The question is whether the Attorney General's proposals will match the need for change when they are published."

Prosecutors' "bias", page 2

After 10 hours, 45 minutes ...



England's heroes: Michael Atherton, left, who resisted the South African bowlers for 645 minutes, leaving the field with Jack Russell after the pair had saved the second Test in Johannesburg
Photograph: Laurence Griffiths / Empics

... he was still there at the end

MARTIN JOHNSON
Johannesburg

England's cricket team, not famous for too many famous victories in recent years, at least managed to pull off a famous draw yesterday. Michael Atherton, the captain, and Jack Russell, the wicketkeeper, battled throughout most of the final day to deny South Africa in Johannesburg, and keep the five-match series level at 0-0 with three Tests still to play.

Atherton, making his ninth Test match century, batted right through the final day for his best score for England, his heroic 182 not out spanning ten and three-quarter hours in all. Atherton was on the field with-

out a break from Friday afternoon right up until the end of the game last night.

Russell, who not so long ago spent a long period out of the side because of his perceived deficiencies as a batsman, joined his captain in what appeared to be a hopeless cause with half of England's second innings wickets gone and nearly five hours of the match still remaining. Russell was almost entirely strokeless for his 25 not out, but was still there at close of play.

Atherton's performance, rated by his manager Raymond Illingworth as "one of the great Test innings" and by the South African coach Bob Woolmer as "brilliant", ranked as a rearguard action alongside Dennis

Amis's 262 not out (nine hours) in Jamaica in 1974, and David Gower's 154 not out (nearly eight hours) on the same ground in 1981.

England, who began the final day written off at 167 for 4, lost only the wicket of Robin Smith before finishing at 351 for 5. A crowd of 14,000 had turned up in anticipation of a South African victory, but most had disappeared long before the end.

England have a long history of losing early matches and failing to come back in Test series, but now have a psychological advantage before the final three games in Durban, Port Elizabeth and Cape Town. Report, scorecard, page 28

Welfare war puts France on the edge

MARY DEJEVSKY
Paris

The French government was attempting to stand firm last night as it braced for a new and possibly decisive day of national protest today against its proposed welfare reforms.

After an emergency cabinet meeting - the government spokesman, Alain Lamassoure, said the authorities were determined to carry out reforms, especially an overhaul of the welfare system.

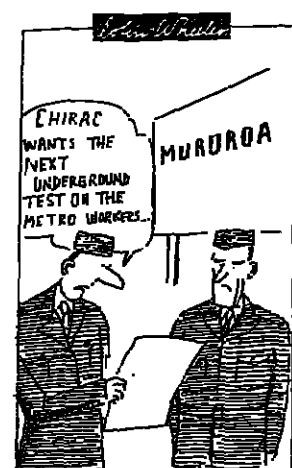
Power workers, hospital staff and lorry drivers joined the nationwide strikes against the reform of France's 50-year-old welfare system yesterday. Today tens, maybe hundreds, of thousands of workers, students and trade union activists are expected to join a protest march along the right bank of the Seine in central Paris while, at the National Assembly on the left bank, the Prime Minister, Alain Juppé, will mount his first major defence of his reforms since the protests began.

Mr Juppé will answer a motion of censure tabled by the opposition Socialist group in the National Assembly, breaking a silence on the reforms that has become deafening in recent days. Although there is no risk of the censure motion being passed - the Opposition parties combined have barely 20 per cent of parliamentary seats - the occasion gives the Prime Minister, and the government, a chance to gauge the strength of parliamentary opposition to their programme.

Speaking in the west African state of Benin on Sunday evening, in a section of an address which was immediately re-broadcast in France, President Jacques Chirac insisted that the choice of reform rather than "fatalism" was his, and that he would stand by it. Mr Chirac's intervention, believed to have been co-ordinated with Mr Juppé, provided the Prime Minister with urgently needed

support, but it also appeared to exclude the President from the mediating role some have said he should take should the crisis worsen.

Yesterday, with new groups of workers joining, or threatening to join, the strike and today's demonstration almost hourly, the government made its first attempt to limit the effects of the strikes on those who are still working. It hired 1,700 coaches to transport commuters from Paris suburbs into the capital and home again in the evening, and a boat service to connect the eastern and western extremities of the city centre.



However, fewer than 400 coaches were available for the morning rush hour, which meant renewed traffic jams morning and evening. With 80 per cent of postal sorting offices now on strike, a few regions set up emergency services, but the country remained paralysed.

The national rail service remains at a standstill, as does local public transport in Paris and several other cities. Airline workers again occupied the runways at Orly airport yesterday, blocking domestic air traffic for several hours.

France in Revolt, pages 10 and 11
Hamish McRae, page 22

British Gas smear was fed to Labour

CHRIS BLACKHURST

An internal British Gas memorandum containing inaccurate information about a competitor was handed to the Labour Party, which quoted from the document under the cloak of parliamentary privilege.

This new revelation follows the disclosure in the Independent yesterday of the tactics being employed by Angus MacIsland, a public relations adviser to British Gas, in handing out anonymous documents critical of Clare Spottiswoode, director-general of the watchdog Ofgas.

United Gas, the new competitor to British Gas, called last night for "Ofgas or alternatively the Department of Trade and Industry, to launch an official investigation to establish both the source of, and the authority behind, this anonymous material. We also reserve all our rights to legal redress and we will be considering our position further."

The company said it had been concerned for some time about attempts to discredit it. Roger Turner, managing director of United, said: "We deplore this kind of cowardly behaviour. If other companies, or other persons retained by those companies, wish to raise allegations about United Gas, they should do so openly rather than in this covert fashion."

United was particularly concerned about references in the Commons in March by Jack Cunningham, then Shadow Trade and Industry Secretary, that TransCo, the distribution arm of British Gas, was "having problems with United, which is not paying its bills."

Mr Cunningham was quoting directly from a memorandum prepared for a meeting of British Gas's public relations team, headed by Peter Sanghetti, the company's public affairs director. The memo set out a timetable of "events/announcements" affecting the PR

machine. Against the entry for early January 1995 was written: "TransCo will have a problem with United, who are not paying their bills."

United was stung by the remarks, which it said were completely unjustified. It told Dr Cunningham that the problem was of TransCo's own making, because the British Gas subsidiary had been performing badly, and its customers, including United, had decided to withhold cash until the problems had been resolved.

British Gas's rival compared the charge to the "dirty tricks" campaign waged by British Airways which made unfounded allegations of non-payment of bills against its upstart challenger, Virgin Atlantic.

In his reply to United's complaint, Dr Cunningham suggested United take it up directly with British Gas.

Margaret McKinlay, head of compliance at British Gas, wrote: "TURN TO PAGE 2"

IN BRIEF

Swalec bonanza
More than 1,600 staff at Swalec, the South Wales electricity distributor, will make a £21,000-a-head profit on share options in the wake of an agreed £872m takeover from Cardiff-based utility, Welsh Water. Page 21

Disaster inquiry
Fifteen years after the sinking of the 90,000-tonne Derbyshire, Britain's largest merchant navy loss, a £2m underwater investigation into the disaster is to be mounted. Page 2

Today's weather
Very cold across the UK, with snow settling in some eastern areas. Section Two, page 21

Lottery cash may fund new plays

DAVID LISTER
Arts Correspondent

Plans to fund new operas, plays, paintings and ballets with money from the National Lottery are being considered by Virginia Bottomley, the Secretary of State for National Heritage.

Such changes, which would not need legislation, could have the bizarre result of publicly funded companies commissioning wealthy playwrights such as Harold Pinter or Tom Stoppard out of lottery takings, as well as helping struggling artists in need of a lifeline.

They would also benefit dance and drama students on discretionary grants who have been hit hard by local authority cuts in recent years.

While these alterations to the lottery might find favour in the arts world they would risk charges of elitism elsewhere, and questions as to why painters and playwrights should not take their chances in the marketplace with everyone else. Students who are not on art courses would also want a share of lottery money to help boost their grants.

The Arts Council chairman, Lord Gowrie, is determined to

press Mrs Bottomley for more help for the arts from the lottery. At present lottery funds are intended mainly for capital projects such as new buildings. He will urge that this be extended to new work such as plays and operas on the grounds that these are just as much new creations as buildings.

He will also argue that there is little point in giving lottery money to new buildings when the council, after a cash cut of £5m, cannot afford to fund the work going on inside them.

Arts Council officials are currently having discussions

with civil servants from the Department of National Heritage on extending the lottery.

An Arts Council insider said that both sides were united in wanting to extend the scope of the lottery to commission new work. The source confirmed that this could indeed mean lottery money being used to commission new work from established writers such as Pinter and Stoppard, but the main thrust would be towards companies commissioning new, young artists.

Mrs Bottomley was disappointed with Treasury cuts to the

arts and last week publicly emphasised "the need to invest in people".

Giving bursaries to dance and drama students is being seen as one way of investing in people and the National Heritage Secretary has also said that the lottery needs to help the young.

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section ONE

BUSINESS 20-24 COMMENT 18-19 CROSSWORD 28 GAZETTE 16
LAW REPORT 16 LEADING ARTICLES 16 LETTERS 18 NEWS 2-15
OBITUARIES 16 SHARES 23 SPORT 25-28 UNIT TRUSTS 24

section TWO

ARTS 6-10 CROSSWORD 22 FASHION 12,13 FEEDBACK 22
LISTINGS 20,21 MEDIA 16-19 SCIENCE 14,15
REVIEWS 10 TELEVISION & RADIO 23,24 WEATHER 21

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news

Maritime mystery: Victims' families hope truth will finally be established 15 years after ship sank in Pacific

New inquiry into loss of 'Derbyshire'

CHRISTIAN WOLMAR
Transport Correspondent

A £2m underwater investigation is to be mounted 15 years after the sinking of the 90,000-tonne *Derbyshire*, Britain's largest merchant navy loss, in an effort to ascertain the cause of the disaster.

The decision by Sir George Young, Secretary of State for Transport, to mount the expedition was made after he read a report by the former Master of the *Rolls*, Lord Donaldson, into the loss of the ship, published yesterday. Lord Donaldson argues that the need for the inquiry is "compelling" be-

cause of the widespread implications for seafarers in the 400 bulk carriers now sailing the world. Between 1980 and 1994, 149 bulk carriers have been lost with the deaths of 1,144 seafarers, including nine losses with 123 deaths last year.

The decision is a vindication of a 15-year battle by the families of the 44 who died on the ship and by international trade unions to reopen the inquiry into the loss of the *Derbyshire*, which was carrying iron ore. They have argued that the sinking points to basic structural design flaws and last year the International Transport Workers Federation paid £400,000 for

an underwater investigation of the ship which lies 4,100 metres (13,451 ft) down in the Pacific off Japan. Pictures taken during that expedition led to Lord Donaldson's inquiry.

Lord Donaldson expressed the hope that the expedition could take place next spring because of his fears for the "sailors put at risk" if it cannot be prepared in time.

A previous inquiry into the loss, in 1985-86, was felt to have been a whitewash because while its leaked draft conclusion suggested that the accident was caused by a structural failure, the final version merely said that no cause could be ascertained

When a sister ship of the *Derbyshire*, the *Kowloon Bridge*, sank with suspicions that it had similar structural faults to those on the *Derbyshire* the inquiry was reopened but it found that "the *Derbyshire* was probably overwhelmed by the forces of nature in Typhoon Orchid".

Renewed attempts to reopen the inquiry were rejected by the then transport secretary, Malcolm Rifkind, in 1991.

Although the trade union expedition found the fore section of the ship, the aft part has not yet been found. Lord Donaldson said that if the new expedition discovered it well separated from the aft, "say five

kilometres", then structural break-up was the likely cause of what is one the "great unexplained mysteries" of the sea.

Lord Donaldson identified three possible causes of the sinking: structural failure at Frame 65, which is close to the engine room and crew accommodation; the failure of the front hatch cover under pressure from waves; or corrosion, which in a four-year-old ship, would have serious implications.

Lord Donaldson said no significant design changes had been made to bulk carriers since the accident.

Hatch covers now, as when the *Derbyshire* was built, were



The 'Derbyshire' was lost with the cost of 44 lives

designed to withstand a less-than 6 ft head of water, whereas in severe conditions pressures could be much greater.

Lord Donaldson said: "I per-

sonally find this quite astonishing, whether or not it is established that this was the cause, or a contributory cause, of the loss."

IN BRIEF

Labour acts over 'problem' council

Labour's National Executive Committee has intervened to knock heads together in the "fraught" ruling Labour group on Hackney council, in north London, following its rancorous split earlier this year, it was revealed yesterday.

"The problem is an unwillingness of some councillors to take tough decisions," said a Labour spokesman, citing the reluctance to close the underperforming Hackney Downs school. "Every suggestion for making cuts is voted down by one coalition or another."

Since leader John McCafferty was ousted in May, Labour has been worried a local difficulty could escalate into a national embarrassment. The decision to intervene, taken by the NEC last week but not publicised, followed a request from new council leader, Nick Tallentire.

'Mad cow' row

Professor Jeffrey Almond, chairman of the Independent Spongiform Encephalopathy Advisory Committee, a working group investigating mad cow disease, condemned Ministry of Agriculture cuts at one of the main centres investigating the disease. The loss of £330,000 at the Neuropathogenesis Unit, in Edinburgh, which will cost up to 15 of 50 jobs, is "scandalous" and "crazy", he said.

Mitchell sets date

The first hearings of the international body dealing with the decommissioning of IRA and Loyalist paramilitary weapons, chaired by US Senator George Mitchell, were set for 15 to 18 of this month.

Girl's £1.7m award

A brain-damaged girl was awarded £1.7m after a High Court judge watched a "moving" video of her and her mother, West London Housewife and Queen Charlotte's Hospital Special Health Authority admitted negligence in their care of Maureen Helliwell hours before the birth in 1987 of her daughter Elizabeth, now eight, who suffered cerebral palsy.

Union turns left

Davey Hall, a candidate backed by the left, was elected leader of the Amalgamated Engineering and Electrical Union, one of the Labour Party's biggest and most right-wing affiliates. Mr Hall, 44, an official from Tyne and Wear, beat the official right-wing candidate by 74,060 votes to 50,564 in a postal ballot on a turnout of 28 per cent. He takes over from Bill Jordan in the New Year.

Man's head pierced

A factory worker who pulled a superheated steel rod out of his head with his hands after an accident in 1991 was awarded an estimated £1m damages after the High Court was told he was now a "helpless nobody". An 85-metre-long bar, heated to between 500 and 700C, went right through 28-year-old Kelvin Page's skull after it shot off a cooling bed at Co Steel UK factory in Sheerness, Kent. He suffered severe brain damage. The firm did not dispute liability.

Divorce vote appeal

The Dublin High Court gave the chairman of the Anti-Divorce Campaign, former senator Des Hanafin, leave to appeal against the result of last month's Irish divorce referendum. He maintained it was passed only after "unlawful and unconstitutional" use of public funds to promote a pro-divorce victory.

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Question of justice: Crown prosecutor complains of 'undue pressure' by officers

Police accused of forcing trials on lawyers

STEPHEN WARD
Legal Affairs Correspondent

Chuck Nduka-Eze's experience illustrates the day-to-day conflicts between the police and the Crown Prosecution Service over which cases to take to trial.

Until this summer he worked as a senior Crown prosecutor in London, bringing cases to Bow Street magistrates' court. He left his job after a row which brought to a head his concerns that the CPS was too often taking the police's word for it that a prosecution was sound, and was not rigorously independent enough.

"The CPS was set up to give an independent assessment of cases, away from the police. We have to decide two things: there must be a realistic prospect of conviction and it must be in the public interest to go ahead. Those are judgements we are supposed to make, not the police," he said.

"The police don't care. Their view is: 'This man has done it. Let's get him into court.'"

He accepts that there has to be give and take with the police, in the pressured circumstances of a magistrates' court.

The advice in his office was: "Best keep on the right side of the police", and there was pressure on him to be "a good team player", he said.

"By law I should be allowed say I was not happy with any case. That was my role."

He said different CPS office bosses took different views of their relationship with the police. Some backed their prosecutors more than others when they complained of undue pressure. He contends that his boss did not back him early adequately.

Mr Nduka-Eze, 32, a barrister, has now returned to the Bar and is suing the CPS for breach of contract and taking his case to an industrial tribunal claiming that he was forced out of his job after resisting police pressure to bend the rules. The CPS has said it intends to defend the cases strenuously but would not comment on details of the allegations.

Mr Nduka-Eze described a case late last year which he says illustrates the way police can wrest control from prosecutors. When the case of a man charged with assault and living off immoral earnings came up at Bow Street, a constable from



Chuck Nduka-Eze: Says the CPS is not independent enough Photograph: David Sandison

the Vice Squad turned up too late for him to see the papers, but offered to go into the witness box to say the man was dangerous and there was a risk of harm to the woman. He refused, and said he needed time to make up his own mind. Within minutes an inspector arrived to

put pressure on him. Eventually, he had to go along with the suggestion, and the police got the man in custody they wanted. When he later saw the papers, he found the woman had no convictions for prostitution, and the couple had three children and had been living together for

13 years with no allegations to the police for violence. The police complained formally about Mr Nduka-Eze, and although his version of events was eventually accepted by his boss, David Atkins, he was later transferred to duties in a different area.

Child asylum-seekers are 'victims of war'

LOUISE JURY

The majority of lone children arriving in Britain to seek asylum are not economic migrants but victims of war and civil disturbance, it was claimed yesterday.

As the Government prepares a clampdown on the unaccompanied arrivals following a 67 per cent increase in their numbers, solicitors and refugee workers described the conditions which forced them to flee their homelands.

Tim Kirkhope, the Home Office minister responsible for

immigration, condemned these children's parents for sending them to an "uncertain future", and said he believed many were economic migrants sent to Britain because their families could not support them.

Numbers are expected to top 600 by the end of the year, Mr Kirkhope said, at an estimated annual cost to the taxpayer of £12m.

But refugee workers and solicitors said although family poverty was a factor in some cases, many young people faced conscription or risked physical

assault if they had stayed in their native countries.

In families already devastated by civil unrest or fighting, often the eldest son would be sent to safety to ensure the family line was preserved.

Peter Bartram, a solicitor whose practice lies near Heathrow airport, said they had seen youngsters from countries like Afghanistan who had already seen frontline action.

Official figures showed that famine and civil war have a significant impact on numbers. Mr Bartram noted increases from Eritrea during its war and from Sierra Leone during rebel uprisings.

Mr Bartram said: "Even if they haven't actually been in personal danger, their family has often suffered tragedies. They are often very, very isolated. Not only have they been separated from their families, but arriving here, they are in a completely alien culture." Some even had no idea which country they were in.

The majority are around the age of 16 and few are younger than 14. Terry Smith, of the children's division of the Refugee Council, said that the increase was undoubtedly but also marked better identification procedures by immigration officials.

As soon as lone arrivals are identified, they become the responsibility of social services. Roy Mills, spokesman for Hillingdon council which covers Heathrow, said they currently have 144 children under 18 costing the authority £2.8 million a year. Unless a relative was traced in Britain, most then remain in council care.

Escape from clutches of Afghan guerrillas

Mohamed (not his real name) was abducted from the streets of Peshawar, Pakistan, and forced to carry ammunition for Afghan rebels, writes Louise Jury.

The bullets were in little boxes and some were in long straps, he has told his solicitors at Peter Bartram and Co. Grenades looked like a little ball with a pin in the top and a kalashnikov was different from other kinds of guns. One of the bigger guns needed a tripod, he said.

It is not the detail you would expect from a 15-year-old who can neither read nor write and who has never seen a television.

Like a beast of burden, he shouldered his heavy loads in the mountains on the Afghan-Pakistan border. He has described how the rebels made him walk in front of tanks. Any landmine

would blow his leg off, instead of disabling the tank.

He was kept locked up overnight, he has said, and was only ever let out to work.

Only when the man in charge of the munitions was shot did he see his chance to escape.

Fearing what would happen to him, members of Mohamed's family smuggled him on board a plane in Pakistan. He was told to keep down, stay quiet. He arrived alone and unannounced at Heathrow airport four weeks ago. He is claiming asylum and is intensely worried about being sent back.

The solicitors have no way of knowing whether his story is true, but they believe that it is. There have been other cases of children abducted in Peshawar.

Algerian exile 'facing death by deportation'

PETER VICTOR

An Algerian former policeman married to a British woman is today being deported to face what his friends fear is certain death.

Hocine Dib, 29, who has lived in Britain for the last two years, was due to be deported by British immigration authorities at 6am today on the grounds that he is an illegal immigrant. His pleas for political asylum have been ignored, despite mass murder and terror in his home country.

In the past three years, 40,000 people have been killed in Algeria; some 50 people get murdered every night. The GIA (Armed Islamic Group) in Algeria specifically targets policemen, journalists and people with links to the West. The authorities have killed in cold blood people they suspect of supporting the fundamentalists.

Mr Dib's wife, Patti, a teacher, said after visiting him yesterday at Rochester prison: "I now have the choice between losing my husband or leaving my mother-in-law to live in a country the Home Office says is too dangerous for Britons to visit."

Mr Dib arrived in Britain in



Hocine Dib: 'Could be in danger from either side'

September 1993 on a tourist visa and applied for asylum. The couple married a year later. The Home Office said because he arrived as a tourist and then claimed asylum he was automatically an illegal immigrant. The couple went through the usual immigration formalities. Last June after a joint interview with the immigration service they were told to be cautiously optimistic. Last week, Mr Dib was summoned by the

Home Office for an immigration "interview". On arrival he was arrested, told he would be deported and taken to Southwark police station and then Heathrow Airport.

Mrs Dib said: "He could be in danger from either side. The extremists are still dangerous and the police might want to 'interview' him because he deserted his post."

"He only joined the police because he liked detective work. People arrive in Algeria and don't even make it through customs."

The couple's lawyer is now considering applying for a judicial review. A Home Office spokesman said he would not discuss individual cases.

A Home Office minister yesterday defended plans to send a democracy activist back to Nigeria. Abiodun Igbidun claims he faces persecution and torture at home, where nine human rights campaigners, including the writer Ken Saro-Wiwa, were executed last month. Immigration minister Ann Widdecombe said: "Obviously we simply can't say that anyone in Nigeria who is disaffected with the regime can just come here in a blanket way."

Gas smear was fed to Labour

FROM PAGE ONE

to United explaining that the company could not be responsible for Dr Cunningham's words. She added the company was holding a leak inquiry.

Dr Cunningham said last night that he did not get the information on which he based his Commons statement "directly from British Gas."

Labour joined the controversy yesterday and called for an inquiry by the Office of Fair Trading into the attacks on Ms Spottiswoode and United's threat of legal action. Nigel Griffiths, the party's trade and industry spokesman, said he would be writing to the OFT and "ministers should also investigate."

For the Liberal Democrats, Nick Harvey said: "Mr Maitland has done himself no favours. If there are criticisms to be made of utility regulators, let us have them done properly and openly."

A British Gas spokeswoman last night said the company was not to blame for Dr Cunningham's comments. "It was

leaked. United took it up with us and we have given them a full account and apologised."

Responding to the article in yesterday's *Independent* about Mr Maitland's activities, the spokeswoman said: "There is no smear campaign emanating from the offices of British Gas, and to suggest such a thing is nonsense."

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سكرا من الامل

MP's wife 'made obscene calls to neighbour'

REBECCA FOWLER

The wife of David Ashby, the Tory MP, made obscene phone calls to a neighbour, suggesting he was having a homosexual affair with her husband, it was claimed in court yesterday.

Dr Ciaran Kilduff, 32, who lived in the flat beneath Mr. Ashby's told a jury that following the collapse of her marriage Silvana Ashby, 53, left at least three abusive messages on his answering machine in October 1993, before he changed his telephone number.

"The gist of the messages was I had been having a homosexual affair," Dr Kilduff said. "The last call was not a message, it was just a tirade of obscenities."

Dr Kilduff was giving evidence in the second week of the libel case brought against the *Sunday Times* and its former editor, Andrew Neil, by Mr. Ashby over allegations that he is a homosexual.

Although Mr. Ashby has agreed he shared a bed with Dr Kilduff on a trip to France to save money, he denies the newspaper's allegations, and both he and Dr Kilduff deny they were physically intimate.

Dr Kilduff, who spoke in a soft Irish accent, dismissed the allegation as "nonsense". Dr Kilduff had agreed to the French trip, provided it was

carefully budgeted, because he believed Mr. Ashby was depressed by a furious argument with his wife over Christmas 1993.

Mrs. Ashby allegedly arrived at their flat in Putney, south-west London, on Christmas Eve 1993, after Mr. Ashby refused her invitation to Christmas lunch because he had arranged to spend it with Dr Kilduff.

Dr Kilduff denied that Mrs. Ashby had seen Mr. Ashby put his arm around him through the kitchen window, where he was preparing a salad supper. He said she caused a commotion and eventually he had to call the police.



David Ashby and his daughter Alexandra

"Her behaviour was absolutely bizarre. I certainly hadn't seen anything like it outside my work place," said Dr Kilduff, who was working with psychiatric patients at the time. "She was in a complete frenzy. She wasn't making any sense

... she then proceeded to go into his study and start ripping the wallpaper off the wall."

Dr. Kilduff travelled to France with Mr. Ashby in the new year. On the second day they went to Agincourt in north-west France and then to the nearby Chateau Tilque hotel. Dr Kilduff accepted a double room which he said he expected to be twin-bedded.

"We went into the room and somewhat to my surprise it wasn't twin-bedded. It had one very large double bed," Dr Kilduff said, although he later added he was used to sharing a bed with his brothers as a child because he had so many siblings.

"Anyway the fact was we

were there. It had been a long cold day. I don't think we were in the mood to go traipsing back down to say this isn't good enough."

Mr. Ashby's daughter also gave evidence yesterday. Alexandra Ashby, 27, described her parents' tormented marriage, and said she felt forced to support her father in the case against her mother's claims, although she loved them "deeply" and "equally".

As Mr and Mrs Ashby sat at separate ends of the courtroom, Miss Ashby portrayed their frequent fights in which her mother, prone to "exaggeration and invention", accused her father of both

homosexual and heterosexual affairs.

Among those her mother named were a male parliamentary researcher, a male barrister friend, and a woman from his constituency, Leicestershire North West.

Miss Ashby also said her mother had accused her of being a lesbian when she was 15 because she shared a changing booth with a girlfriend on a private Italian beach during a family holiday.

"I don't know what provoked her," Miss Ashby said. "She made a big scene in front of all my friends on the beach. It was terrible."

The case continues.

Good Morning and bad blood: Presenter's husband enters fray over ailing show with attack on BBC's production values

How cosy chats on the sofa turned into a daytime drama

MARIANNE MACDONALD
Media Correspondent

The cosy image of *Good Morning with Anne and Nick* was yesterday shattered by accusations of feminism and political correctness in a confrontation worthy of any daytime soap opera.

The row involved Anne Diamond, her husband, and the senior executive in charge of the show in a disagreement which proved that the knives were out behind the famous sofas.

Disagreement has been simmering for months, fuelled by rumours from BBC sources that the show - co-hosted by Nick Owen - was to be axed after steadily losing viewers to *This Morning*, its slicker ITV rival fronted by Judy Finnigan and Richard Madeley.

The ITV show pulls in 1.9 million viewers and plaudits for its sharpness, sexual chemistry and humour, while *Good Morning* has been struggling to keep 800,000 viewers in the face of accusations that it is more interested in knitting patterns than people.

But the presenters are not to blame, according to Mike Hollingsworth, Anne Diamond's husband and a former editor of the programme. In an attack that will do little to endear his wife to staff, he claimed yesterday that her opinions were ignored by the production team, that she had objected to the appointment of the programme's editor, and that as a presenter she was treated as "the lowest of the low".

He also blamed Rod Nield, the executive in overall charge of *Good Morning*, for refusing to clarify "a very ambiguous statement" about the programme's future - presumably to "generate insecurity".

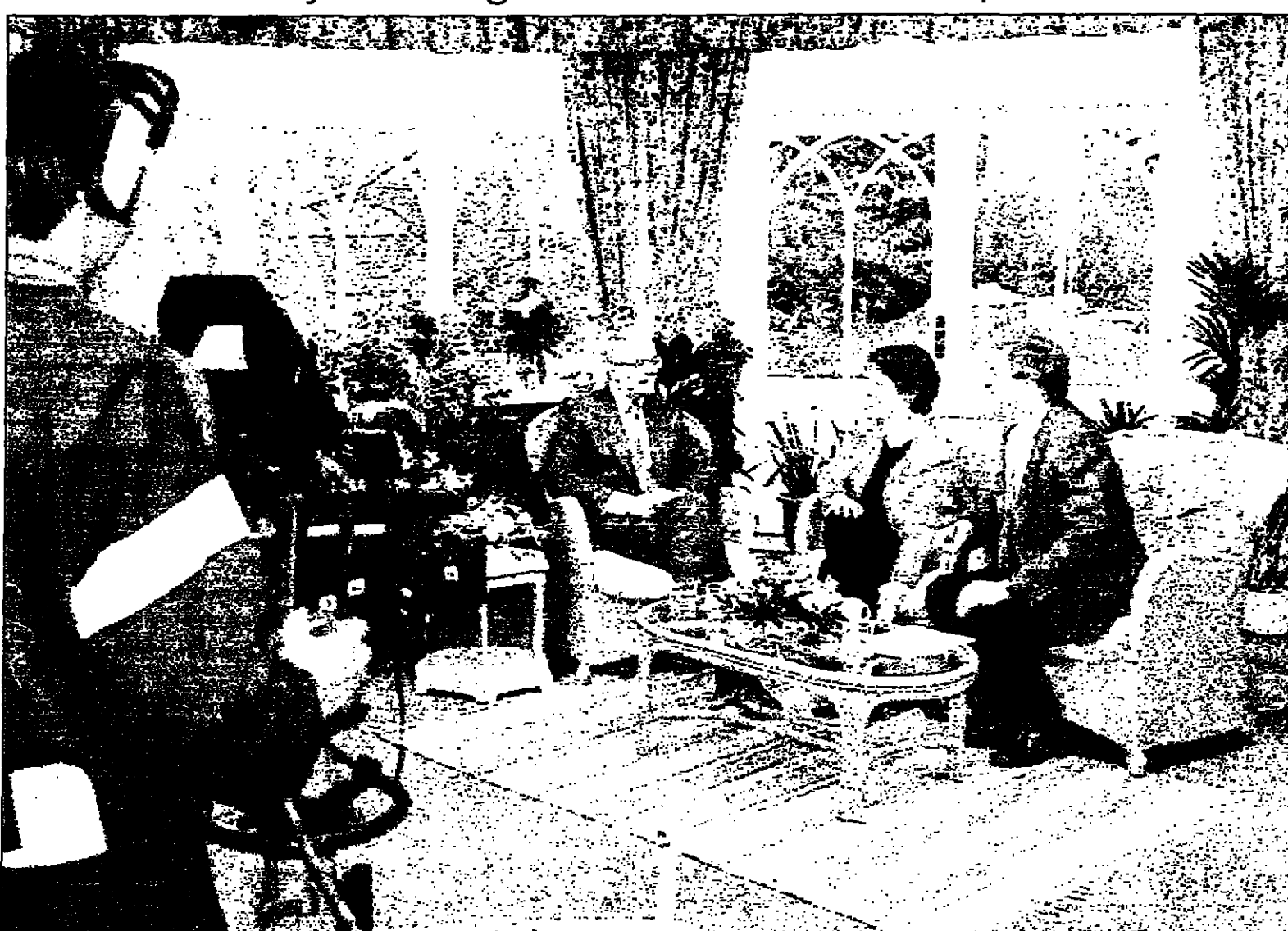
But Mr Hollingsworth reserved the most ire for the programme editor - Tessa Finch, a former *Express* gossip columnist whom he hired as a researcher and who succeeded him when he left the show two years ago.

"She has nothing in common with the viewers," he said - describing her as one of a breed of "cold, politically correct, ambitious" young managers. Mr Hollingsworth said he was "astounded" to learn she had been given the job after Ms Diamond and Mr Owen "said quite clearly she was not the right person".

He added: "Anne and Nick have tried their best. I have watched it and I have felt so helpless because I could see what was happening. They were being asked to introduce items that had no relevance to their viewing audience."

His outburst follows months of troubled relations between Ms Diamond and her bosses. In the summer she went into the corporation's black books for insisting on a four-day week in order to spend more time with her children. She got her way, but it cannot have helped the programme's long-term chances at a time when it was being outstripped by its ITV rival.

The words of Andy Allan, chief executive of Carlton TV, hang ominously in the memory. He has accused both morning programmes of being part of daytime scheduling which was the equivalent of a "flotation tank where you are able to relax by being robbed of all sensory experience".



Prime time: John Major being interviewed by Anne and Nick on their morning show earlier this year

Photograph: News Team

How the stars compare in the sofa wars

	This Morning, ITV	Good Morning, BBC1
Viewing figures	1.9m	0.8m
Hosts	Judy Finnigan and Richard Madeley	Anne Diamond and Nick Owen
Year began	1988	1992
Salaries	about £250,000 each	also about £250,000 each
Location	Albert Dock, Liverpool, but moving to London	Pebble Mill, Birmingham
Sexual chemistry	Not bad; they're married	Non-existent; they're married to other people
Most embarrassing episode	When Richard was accused of shoplifting (he was acquitted)	The man they nominated as the male half of Britain's most romantic couple was a bisexual who fancied Arnold Schwarzenegger
Cause	Kelly Chegwinn revealed his drinking problem. Antonio de Sancha talked about her affair with David Mellor. Stephanie Slater came face to face with the wife of her kidnapper	John Major revealed he doesn't talk politics at home with Norma. Jamie Blandford revealed his father never hugged him. Denis Haily called Anne a "shit".
Critical comment	"The entire programme resembles one of the acts for cheap carpets last autumn during the commercial break: just, its tacky and plastic, but it's only 10p a yard and it covers a huge area for next to no cost." - Victor Lewis-Smith, Evening Standard	"A grisly mixture of fawning and fumbling, a cack-handed exercise in sponsored time-wasting" - Craig Brown, the Sunday Times

Ministers press for royal divorce

COLIN BROWN
Chief Political Correspondent

A future role for the Prince of Wales will be discussed along with a role for his estranged wife tonight at an audience at Buckingham Palace between the Queen and the Prime Minister.

Prince Charles has underlined his disappointment in the past with the failure of the Department of Trade and Industry to use him more effectively in selling Britain and British products abroad.

Ministers are opposed to giving the Prince of Wales any diplomatic role abroad, in spite of the apparent success of her visit to Argentina, until her relationship with the Prince of Wales has been clarified. She is under pressure either to resolve her differences or to agree to move towards an early divorce.

"What ministers are nervous about is they don't want the Princess to be given a role now that can be used by her as a lever against the Prince of Wales," one ministerial source said.

Ministers and the Palace - described by the Princess as "the enemy" - are keen to give her a wider role, providing she accepts the discipline such responsibility brings.

The move is certain to be seen as an attempt by the Palace and Prince Charles's associates to silence the Princess and end the embarrassment of her outspoken disclosures about her extramarital affair, and her views about his fitness to become King.

John Major and the Queen are also likely to touch on the future of the Royal Yacht *Britannia*, which is to be sold off. The Ministry of Defence no longer wants to support a replacement, but the DTI values it as a centre to promote British business and exports, and ministers are trying to secure private investment for a more cost-effective Royal Yacht.

The Queen Mother, 95, left hospital yesterday 18 days after her successful hip operation, walking unaided out of the King Edward VII Hospital for Officers, in London.

Battered wife appeal begins

HEATHER MILLS
Home Affairs Correspondent

Sara Thornton, a cause célèbre for battered women, yesterday began a second Court of Appeal attempt to overturn her conviction for murdering her drunken, violent husband.

Michael Mansfield QC said Mrs Thornton, now 38, should benefit from changes in both the law and in expert opinion, in relation to battered wives syndrome and defences to murder - particularly the issue of provocation.

Furthermore, there was new evidence - some of it available at her trial and not used - supporting her claims of repeated abuse and drunken violence at the hands of her husband, Malcolm Thornton. Dr Max Glatt, a world authority on alcoholism, who had treated Mr Thornton, had stated that the wives of alcoholics "lived on the edge of a volcano" and could easily snap as a result of provocation over a long period of time.

Mrs Thornton, of Atherstone, Warwickshire, had sought



Sara Thornton: 'Lived on the edge of a volcano'

the help of friends, her GP and solicitor, the police, Alcoholics Anonymous and a psychiatrist specialising in alcohol abuse before she killed her husband, Malcolm, a former policeman, on 14 June 1989. With a single deep thrust, she fatally stabbed him in the stomach with a kitchen knife. He had been calling her a whore and repeated his threats to kill her.

The appeal continues today.

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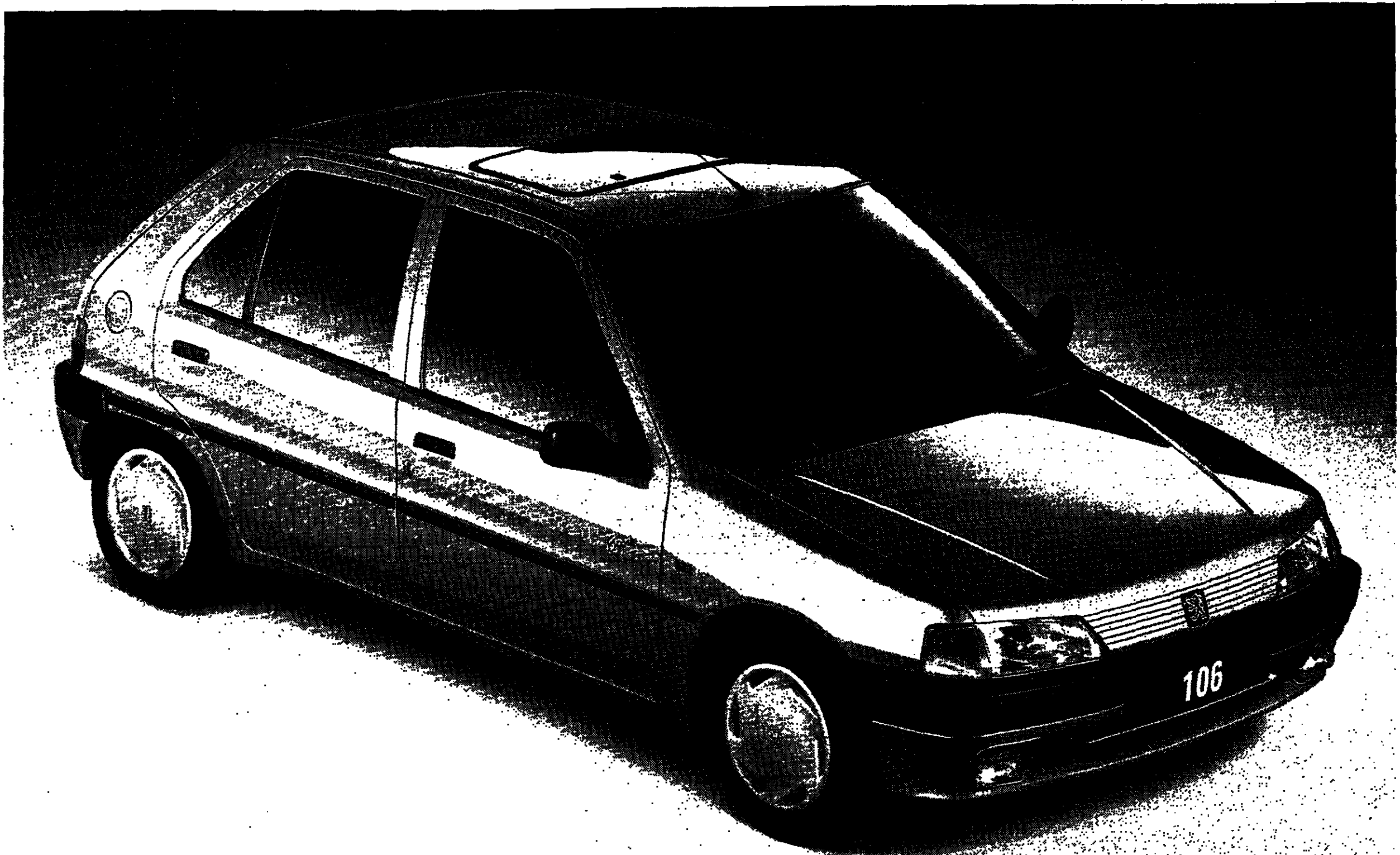
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Rail bids jeopardised by high risk to operators

CHRISTIAN WOLMAR
Transport Correspondent

The privatisation of train services is in danger of foundering because of City fears that the investment is too risky.

City investors have told the Independent that several bids for the first three sets of franchises may collapse because the financial teams backing them are worried about the high level of risk if unforeseen events mean that the train company is unable to run services. Already one private company, Resurgence Railways, has lost its preferred bidder status because it could not prove its financial case was sound.

In particular, they feel that Railtrack, which is due to be privatised next spring, has been given a cushy ride and been able to cover itself for most of the risks by its contracts with the train-operating companies.

One City source said: "Railtrack has had a lot of its risk taken away because the Government wants to ensure it can be sold. The access agreement should be renegotiated."

Railtrack is responsible for the track and signalling. However, under the track-access agreement, there is a cap on Railtrack's liability which means that the burden of any lengthy breakdown on the railway – such as a dispute or major signalling failure – will end up with the train operating company, rather than Railtrack, and could lead to massive costs for them.

The source said: "The finance companies are looking at what would happen if a bridge was blown away or a terrorist attack caused a total stoppage for several days or weeks." He added that he thought that a solution could be found, but Railtrack would have to give way.

The process of rail privatisation is unique in that government subsidy is underpinning the whole system and therefore the City has been reluctant to

come forward. One bidder said: "The City firms all have experts if you want to buy a hotel chain or group of high-street shops, but no one in the City knows anything about the railways."

While many of the bidders have come up with innovative schemes to improve the railways, they are all finding that finance is hard to attract. Candidates need around £40m to mount a bid for one of the big franchises which have turnovers of over £200m per year, and the City is reluctant to put up that sort of sum on the present arrangements which seem to favour Railtrack.

The first three franchises are for South West Trains, operating out of Waterloo; London, Tilbury and Southend services, from Fenchurch Street; and Great Western Railway, the InterCity service running out of Paddington.

Management buy-out (MBO) teams are the preferred bidders for the latter two, while Stagecoach and the management team, backed by Compagnie Générale des Eaux are fighting it out for SWT. However, Resurgence Railways, the original preferred bidder for Great Western, had to pull out of the race for the franchise because of a failure to obtain backing while the in-house GWR team, which had to find additional financial backing just before the closing date for bids, is also now having difficulties in providing sufficient guarantees for its backers.

The MBO team for LTS is also facing similar problems. While most franchises were supposed to be for seven years, LTS is trying to secure a 15-year deal based on providing new trains, but has now run into the same kind of financial difficulties as Resurgence.

Ministers will be anxious to ensure that a way round this problem can be found. Otherwise its deadline of letting these franchises, before Christmas will not be met.

Bypass battle: Protesters draw first blood in Newbury 'direct action' campaign



The high ground: Protesters swarm over a stockpile of rock in yesterday's occupation at Whatley Quarry, Somerset. Photograph: Christopher Jones

Invaders paralyse road-stone quarry

DANNY PENMAN

The opening salvo against the Newbury bypass was fired yesterday when 500 protesters occupied a superquarry in the Mendips which is expected to supply aggregates for the road.

Whatley Quarry, near Frome in Somerset, was stormed at dawn by activists from Earth First!, Freedom Network and the Green Party.

The quarry – 300ft deep and covering 250 acres – is one of the largest in Europe and supplies aggregates for road schemes across southern Eng-

land. About 50 people were arrested.

The owners of the quarry, ARC, have borne the brunt of a three-year direct action campaign by Earth First! which objects to a proposed extension to the quarry because it says it may threaten the flow of water to the hot springs of Bath, 10 miles to the north, and may also damage a nominated European Special Area of Conservation and Asham Wood, a Site of Special Scientific Interest near to the quarry.

Earth First! also wants to stop the quarry's expansion and so

force a rise in the price of aggregate. The organisation hopes that this would force roadbuilders to use more recycled stone and concrete. A proposed quarry extension was rejected last year by John Gummer, the Environment Secretary. ARC has resubmitted the proposals.

The first of the activists broke into the quarry about 5am and began climbing over machinery to force the operators to shut it down. Another group blocked the railway out of the quarry with steel tripods erected in the path of the trains. Others in-

vaded offices and the quarry's control centre. Within 15 minutes the quarry was shut down.

David Weeks, a spokesman for the company, said some of the demonstrators had damaged machinery and computer equipment worth about £25,000. The quarry also lost about 20,000 tonnes of aggregate production worth about £50,000. The protest further stopped the movement of about 150 lorries and 120 rail wagons.

He said: "It's not so much the lost production nor the disruption – it's the damage to the computer equipment and plant

that we regret. The quarry may have to remain closed for another day. It's clearly the lunatic fringe that's come in with the others that did the damage. You have to accept that these people have a point and perhaps the best way of making that point is to stop production."

One of the organisers, who did not wish to be named, said he was "very satisfied" with the day's activities. "It was a show of strength. It shows we can mobilise hundreds of people who are willing to risk arrest – I think we've just touched the tip of the iceberg."

Demand over Leeson papers

Stephen Pollard, the British lawyer of the disgraced futures trader Nick Leeson, has received a Singapore court order to hand over all documents linked to the collapse of Barings Bank, legal sources said yesterday.

Mr Pollard, now back in London, was not available yesterday for comment.

Lawyers for Price Waterhouse, the liquidators of Barings Futures (Singapore), served the order as Mr Pollard left court, said a source who declined to be named.

The order would allow liquidators to look at all documents related to Barings or related to deals made by Leeson, his wife Lisa, or Mr Pollard over Barings. The Singapore inquiry into the collapse of Barings in February with debts of £860m is continuing and is likely to widen.

Nick Leeson was sentenced to six and a half years in jail on Saturday after pleading guilty to two charges of cheating, linked to the bank's demise. He has a week to decide whether to appeal against the sentence.

The papers and documents would include any that provide evidence of assets, contracts and arrangements entered into by either of the Leesons or their agents for the sale of any book, television, newspaper or screen rights, the source said.

Under the terms of the order, Mr Pollard is required to appear in a Singapore court at a date to be decided, the sources said.

Media reports have speculated that Leeson could earn up to £3m from a film about the Barings collapse. Leeson recently signed a book deal, said to be worth in the region of £450,000. There have been numerous unconfirmed rumours of other lucrative contracts with newspapers around the world.

Meanwhile, MPs on the Treasury and Civil Service Select Committee, which is to re-open its inquiries into Barings in the New Year, will question several ex-Barings executives.

Those most likely to be called include Peter Baring, the former chairman, Andrew Tuckey, and Peter Norris, the former head of investment banking.

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AN OPEN LETTER TO THE CABINET

In 1989 a prominent Conservative MP warned the government it was losing its legitimacy because of its disregard of the democratic process. "Why," ex-Minister Ian Gilmour asked "should the people respect that part of its legislation which is based on whim, diktat and dogma?"

That's a question which many must have hoped the government would address, especially in regard to privatisations. As it was ignored, Action for Justice felt compelled to state in the Financial Times (May 25 1995) that depriving the UK of an integrated rail system without the consent of the people could be considered "tantamount to theft".

Yet Transport Ministers and the Office of Passenger Rail Franchising refused to inform bidders of the respectable case for renationalisation without compensation - though you had been aware as early as March 1994 of the legal precedents by which you could be held liable for loss and damage caused by wilful misconduct.

Though Opra's refusal to protect public funds provided grounds to apply for a judicial review, we went for the simpler option - to directly contact a number of companies.

In any case, we believe ALL bidders "would have known or should have known" that BR's breakup was a wrongful act, undertaken without moral authority. Under these circumstances, companies would be disqualifying themselves for compensation.

The country is hoping that the upcoming judicial review sought by Save Our Railways will halt the misdirection of funds, though political considerations are likely to tempt you to appeal or go back to the drawing board, throwing good public money after bad. That would be wrong.

But BR is not the only issue at stake. The real question here is to the public. Will enough of us put party politics aside and "tell truth to power"? If so, real change will at last be possible. Together, we the people can salvage meaning from years of waste, mismanagement and suffering.

Submitted by Suzon Forscay-Moore, Adviser

Action for Justice PO Box 54, Cambridge CB5 8BB Tel/Fax: 01223 327634

The A4J Citizens' Initiative states. The standards of conduct which already apply to Local Government should apply to Ministers. The next Government should hold ex-Ministers collectively surchargeable by a public grand jury.

Signatories include: Dr Martin Balluch, H F Batty, Benedict Birnberg, Dr Alan Bullion, Louise Christian, Mat Coward, Jacob Ecclestone, Dr MG Evans, Plantagenet Somerset Fry, Stephen Hawking, Philip Hedley, Ted Honderich, David Howarth, Dr Bob Johnson, Colin Johnson, Ken Loach, Michael Mansfield QC, Sara Maitland, David Marquand, Dr Arabella Melville, George Monbiot, Suzanne Moore, Robin Page, John Pilger, Sue Rowlands, Vicky Russell, Dr Tom Shakespeare, Janet Smith, Dr Jim Swire, Clifford Tonkin, Arnold Wesker & Jayne Zito.

(Persons in Local Government have been surcharged and disqualified when: (1) power was not exercised in good faith; (2) relevant factors were ignored; (3) irrelevant factors were considered; (4) actions were manifestly unreasonable; (5) proper procedure was not followed; (6) natural justice was subordinated.)

The A4J BR Petition states: British Rail should be reintegrated with no compensation paid to rail franchisees. Bidders would have ignored a relevant factor, that the government was proceeding with a wrongful act undertaken without moral authority.

Yes, I want to make something good happen in British politics!

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news

Care row: Inquiry launched into county's social services amid allegations of misuse of funds



**Lancashire
County
Council**

'In distress': Geraldine Robinson, a cerebral palsy sufferer whose home help is being cut, in a social services brochure, left, and at home, above



Photograph: Peter Lomas

Handicapped hit by cutbacks

CHRIS BLACKHURST

An inquiry has been launched into allegations of financial mismanagement by a county social services department.

Herbert Laming, the Government's chief inspector of social services, has been asked by the health minister, John Bawis, to look into sweeping cutbacks in care packages by Lancashire social services.

Mr Bawis said he was asking Mr Laming "to provide a full report on the position in Lancashire so that I can then decide whether further action by central government is appropriate".

The minister was responding to widespread fury in Lancashire about the cuts. In one case a handicapped woman who appears on the cover of a brochure promoting the county's social services has had her home help package slashed by

the same body from £700 to £300 per week.

The parents of Geraldine Robinson, who suffers from cerebral palsy, said they were outraged by the move, which they claim was entirely unjustified - there had been no improvement in her condition.

"We are appalled," said Catherine Robinson. "I do not think there are words strong enough to describe how we feel." Geraldine, her mother said, "is very distressed about it. She cannot concentrate on anything. I despair for her."

Geraldine Robinson was encouraged by the council to live independently and move into a two-bedroomed unit, to allow her carers to be with her. According to Harold Elletson, Conservative MP for Blackpool North, she was told she had to accept the cuts and withdrawal of some of her care or face go-

ing into residential accommodation - which she abhorred.

The fact that a picture showing her in a wheelchair was in the leaflet added insult to injury. "It makes it even worse," said Mrs Robinson, at her Blackpool home. "We are hoping the chief inspector will sort it out." Ms Robinson, who requires 24-hour care, is one of many people across Lancashire to feel the brunt of the cuts.

Local Tory MPs, who pressed Mr Bawis to send in the chief inspector, say their mail-bags are full of complaints at reductions in home helps and respite care. People with learning difficulties also face increases in charges for non-residential services.

Nigel Evans, Tory MP for Ribblesdale, cited the case of an 85-year old woman in his constituency who after having a home help for 15 years has

been told the service is being withdrawn this month.

Social services staff have reportedly been told to reduce their home visits because the council can no longer afford their mileage. The Tories accused the Labour-led council of misallocation of resources. This was not a case, they claimed, of central government wielding the axe.

"The total amount available to Lancashire County Council to spend on social services has consistently increased since 1990-91, when total funding of social services was £92m," Mr Elletson said. In 1993-94, that figure had risen to £147m, in the last financial year it was up to £169m and this year, Mr Elletson claimed, there is £185m available.

Despite the increases, Lancashire has been plunged into crisis. One of the reasons, the

Tories charge, is the council's insistence on relying upon its own inefficient in-house services. Council-run services cost between £11.20 and £17 an hour, compared with £5.75 to £6 an hour in the private sector. Another reason is misallocation of resources.

While Ms Robinson has seen her care package cut, it is claimed that the council found £2,000 a week to send someone less deserving than her on a riding course in Ireland and also to go to Australia, all in the company of social workers.

While the Conservatives argue, the council has been to protect the jobs of its own staff - last year it took on a further 203 in its social services department - it is not prepared to support the county's 15,000 private sector care workers. The independent Lancashire Homes Association estimates £10.8m

could be saved from the council budget if it made full use of their facilities.

This is denied by the council, which accuses the Tories of underfunding community care. This year 44 per cent of its social services budget will be spent in the private sector.

"Lancashire has sought to offer choice between care at home and residential care," said Joan Humble, chairwoman of the social services committee. "Changes in funding arrangements and insufficiency of funds severely limited the capacity for such choice, and also meant some people suffered a loss or withdrawal of service in order that the needs of the most dependent people could be met."

She said the council would co-operate with Mr Laming's inquiry but health department officials "surely already have all the information they require".

Death left tycoon's son facing chaos

JOHN WILCOCK
Financial Correspondent

The Maxwell Trial



Day 114

An Old Bailey jury was asked yesterday to remember the chaos which followed the sudden death of Robert Maxwell. In his closing speech for Ian Maxwell, Edmund Lawson QC told the jury that on 8 November 1991, barely three days after his father's mysterious death at sea, Ian Maxwell had signed documents relating to the pledging of shares in the Israeli company Teva.

Ian Maxwell would not have been involved at all but for the enforced absence of his younger brother, Kevin, in New York.

Mr Lawson said that in those days, apart from coping with his own grief, there was a large publishing business to run, world leaders and the press to deal with as well as the task of arranging his father's funeral.

When the prosecution claimed that "this must have been thought of, this must have been spoken of" at the time, Mr Lawson asked the jury to remember all the things that were actually happening in those chaotic days.

He said that although Ian Maxwell had been described repeatedly by the prosecution as no fool, he was not a financial expert. "I do not suggest he was a dimbo," Mr Lawson said. "He is an able businessman." However, his role in the Maxwell empire had been non-financial.

He said one thing the trial - now in its seventh month - had shown was how hard everyone had worked. "It wasn't all caviar, it wasn't all luxury."

Mr Lawson accused the media of baselessly and maliciously trying to slander Ian Maxwell and making a sick joke out of the Maxwells. "But this case has been no joke for Ian Maxwell, it has been purgatory." He had waited three and a half years to demonstrate his innocence to a "fair-minded tribunal".

Ian Maxwell, Kevin Maxwell and a former Maxwell executive, Larry Trachtenberg, deny conspiracy to defraud the pension funds by misusing £22m worth of the Teva shares.

The prosecution claim the defendants knew the shares be-

longed to the pension fund and not to the Robert Maxwell Group when they pledged them and dishonestly put them at risk.

Ian Maxwell and Trachtenberg have not given evidence but Kevin Maxwell told the court he believed his father when he told him the beneficial ownership of the shares had been transferred from BIM (Bishopsgate Investment Management, which administered the pension fund) to RMG.

Kevin Maxwell alone denies a similar charge of conspiring with his father to misuse £100m worth of shares in another Israeli company, Seitz.

The prosecution claim these shares too belonged to BIM and were dishonestly used by the Maxwells to pay private company debts. Kevin Maxwell has claimed that his father again told him that beneficial ownership had been transferred from BIM to RMG and had shown him an amended document supporting this.

Earlier, Michael Hill QC, for Mr Trachtenberg, said he was not part of the "inner circle" of the Maxwell Group. The American-born former United Nations researcher had degrees in international and political studies, not finance.

Mr Hill accused Trevor Cook, a BIM executive, of lying in court to serve his own interests and to protect himself. Mr Hill said the prosecution had not proved their allegations that Trachtenberg participated in a fraudulent scheme.

Lord Justice Phillips has told the jury he hopes to start summing up a week today, but asked them for their Christmas plans in case he is not ready and has to sit beyond Christmas.

The trial was adjourned until today.

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SAYS
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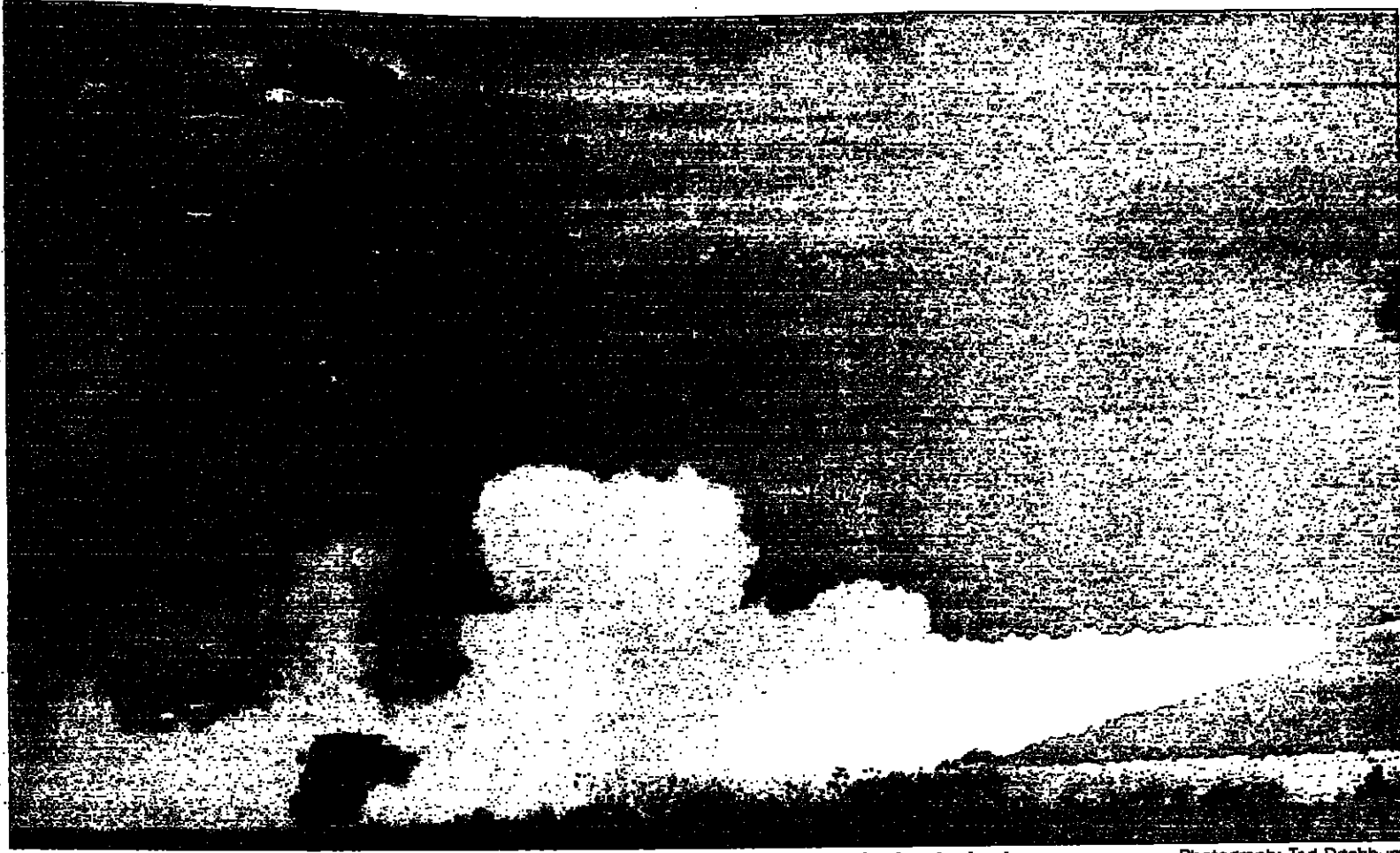
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صوتنا من الامم



Gun law: The multiple-launch rocket system in action at the Otterburn firing range, in Northumberland

Photograph: Ted Ditchburn

Range row: Military fire new salvo in fight over unspoilt area

Army's heavy guns target national park

NICHOLAS SCHOON
Environment Correspondent

The Army opened a powerful new offensive yesterday in its campaign to bring some of its noisiest weapon systems to an English national park.

The military wants to start training with heavy tracked artillery vehicles at its Otterburn training area, which occupies a fifth of the 400 square miles of Northumberland National Park.

It has been negotiating for two years with the local council committee which controls planning over its controversial £23m training development which involves a few new buildings, a concrete apron at Otterburn camp and the widening of more than 20 miles of roads.

When councillors held their quarterly meeting yesterday the Army presented proposals to ease the environmental damage threatened by the plan.

By law, national parks are intended to preserve the natural beauty of Britain's wildest landscapes while promoting public enjoyment. The Government says there should never be any large development within them "save in exceptional circumstances". These are just such circumstances, the Army says.

Hundreds of artillery pieces and tanks have returned from Germany following the collapse of Communism. Salisbury Plain, its most important training area, is in danger of over-use and must be kept free for tank exercises.

Otterburn is the best training area for two powerful self-propelled weapons, the AS90 155mm gun and the 25-ton multiple-launch rocket system (MLRS), says the Army. Besides, it has already been firing large guns there for decades.

This is the only UK training area where the MLRS can safely

launch its salvo of 12 super-sonic rockets. Even the practice rocket requires a safety distance two miles wide stretching for 11 miles. Otterburn is covered in peat which would bog down heavy vehicles, hence the need for nearly 30 miles of roads.

Yesterday Lt-Col James Carter, in charge of pushing through the development, presented changes to the plan to the park committee including cutting back on gun firing positions, opening up four miles of new footpath, demolishing 40 redundant buildings and halting artillery fire in August, the peak holiday month.

It will take several months before the committee makes a decision. If it rejects the plan there will be a public inquiry, with the Government making a final decision. That would delay things by two years, cost over £1m and keep a lot of lawyers in claret," said Lt-Col Carter.

Banks failing the 'friendly' test

Banks should take responsibility for their mistakes and stop blaming computer errors, a consumer watchdog said yesterday.

"Too many banks have lost the personal touch - and too often they give rich customers preferential treatment, the National Consumer Council says.

NCC officials organised eight discussion groups in locations throughout England to find out people's views on the financial services they received.

They concluded there was a need for a new free financial advice service to help people avoid financial difficulties.

"Banks and insurance companies happily compete for new customers, but our survey shows that their enthusiasm wanes once consumers experience money problems," said the NCC chairman, Lady Wilcox. "It is the same old story - they provide an umbrella when the sun shines but take it away at the first sign of rain."

The report says banks should make more use of their knowledge of customers' personal circumstances. People who go overdrawn a day before their pay goes into their account should not be sent a threatening letter - which they have to pay for. Computers should also be programmed to ignore one-off hiccups, said the NCC.

Insurance firms also come under fire. "Many respondents believed insurance companies to be untrustworthy - slow to pay out but quick to make unreasonable increases in premiums," the report said.

DAILY POEM

Plate Glass

By Philip Gross

Your humble servant... Tough and thin
as the sac of an egg that feels the twitch
of beak and claws within.

I'm wall-wide tank of jewel fish
and pearly bubbles. I'm the yes
that money breathes soft as the swish
of limousine tyres in the rain.

Look, don't touch. Just your breath
on the glass leaves a butterfly stain.

Push and shove want to meet.
Take me! cry the goods. If I didn't keep control
they might spill out at anyone's feet.

Stress patterns too fine for the eye
to see spread like the whisper of conspiracy.
One day I'll let go, I'll let fly.

A dancer with knives, that's what I'll be.

Philip Gross was born in Delabole, Cornwall, "beside the slate mine", in 1952. His father was an Estonian refugee and his mother was the daughter of the village schoolmaster. He read English at Sussex University and spent the early part of his working life as a librarian before writing poetry and plays full-time for children and adults. His most recent collection of poems for children, *The All-Nite Café*, won the 1994 Signal Poetry Award. A new collection, *Scratch City*, has just been published by Faber at £3.99.

Girls Girls Girls



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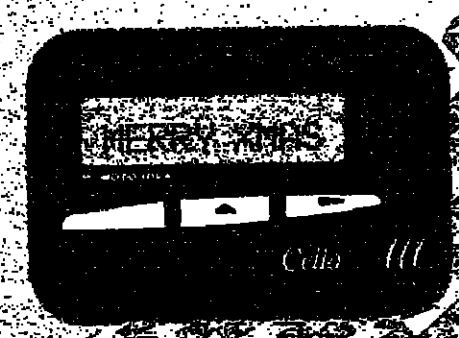
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H-P claims its PA-8000 will outperform others

SECRET

A worldwide shortage of 166 chips is starting to make life difficult for system vendors as Intel shifts semiconductor production in favor of Pentium chips.

DISC

Determined not to lose mind share in the processor game, Hewlett-Packard Co. last week provided a glimpse of its 64-bit PA-RISC 8000 architecture, which is still a year from delivery.

At the same time, officials at HP and Intel Corp. all but denied a wire service news report that said the results of the two companies' collaborative microprocessor development would see a new chip in 1997.

Barrett, who
in tune with
in showing
that the SP2
UltraSPARC
better than 500
By the end of
Larry Jensen,
don't see the value
of the UltraSPARC

IBM and Motorola are announcing the PowerPC 620 this week, the most advanced implementation of the PowerPC

As part of the announcement, the two companies introduced the first 620 prototype, with sample shipments to follow in the second quarter of 1995.

64-bit PowerPC
r, which IBM and
to come
—twice
EAL

th, promises dramatic improvements in multiprocessing over the 601. chips, source

Insel Corp. acknowledged last week that the F7 will be the first ship to come out of the factory. — Current news

PACKARD ALLIANCE

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It for
P/Intel P7

Stuttgart, West Germany — IBM, Apple Computer and Microsoft shared little restraint in hyping the PowerPC chip, which is expected to be available from the end of 1992.

[illegible]

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صیغہٴ من الاصل

Moonlighting MP' offered the sack Blair set to accept nursery vouchers

Several weaknesses in the new rules on MPs' jobs have been exposed by a flood of public reaction to the Private Member's Bill to put the clocks forward an hour and synchronise Britain with the rest of Europe.

Mail has been arriving "by the sack load" for John Butterfill, the Bournemouth, West, who plans to introduce the measure, but he fears accepting

Miss Boothroyd. She explained that the potential conflict was certain to be considered by the Select Committee on Standards and Privileges and it would be wrong of her to pre-empt it.

But the committee has yet to be appointed. And even if it is to be before Christmas, it will be weeks before it decides whether Mr Butterfill can have more help with his post.

Helpful as ever, Dennis Skinner, Labour MP for Bolsover, said if the extra-daylight MP could not find time to answer his letters, "he should give up all those moonlighting jobs that he's got". In the Register of Members' Interests, Mr Butterfill lists three paid directorships, five consultancies and fees for radio and TV appearances, journalism and lectures.

Inside Parliament
Stephen Goodwin



Looking ahead: Children at Mary Seacote nursery, London Photograph: Edward Webb

JOHN RENTOUL and JUDITH JUDD

Tony Blair, the Labour leader, has decided to accept the Conservative scheme for nursery education vouchers if its nationwide launch goes ahead, and his education spokesman, David Blunkett, is considering a plan to trump it by offering higher value vouchers.

Such a move could provoke sharp divisions in the Labour Party, which has always condemned educational vouchers as extreme right-wing dogma.

Mr Blair and Mr Blunkett today launch a crusade to raise standards with plans to close bad schools if there are spare places in nearby schools. Otherwise, they should be reopened with a new head and governors. Teachers would have to reapply for their jobs. In *Excellence for Everyone*, the second education policy paper since Mr Blair became leader, Labour says it should be easier to sack headteachers, that heads should have a new professional qualification and a new grade of "super teacher" should be created.

Meanwhile, Labour is planning to pre-empt nursery vouchers. After a small pilot scheme next year, the Government intends to give all parents of four-year-olds vouchers worth £1,100 to buy part-time nursery school or playgroup places in February 1997, three months before the last date for the general election.

The Labour leader is understood to believe it would be unthinkable to go into the election promising to take the vouchers away. Sources say he is sympathetic to a plan at present being discussed by Mr Blunkett's team to give effect to the party's own aim to provide nursery education for all three-year-olds as well as four-year-olds.

This would stress Labour's claim that the Government's vouchers are inadequate to cover the cost even of many part-time places and offering higher value vouchers to pay for full-time places at age four and part-time places at age three.

Labour local councils have accepted that the party's pledge cannot be delivered quickly enough in the public sector

alone. The Labour-controlled Association of Metropolitan Authorities yesterday set out a plan that would use private and voluntary sectors to top up public provision, but it remains opposed to vouchers, which would subsidise children at private nursery schools and take resources away from councils with good nursery provision.

A spokeswoman for Mr Blair said yesterday: "The suggestion we might be backing the government scheme is frankly absurd. The Government cannot even get Tory councils to back the planned pilot scheme."

The document published today contains other evidence of convergence between Labour and Tory policy, as it backs several policies recently adopted by the Government, such as testing for five-year-olds and the requirement for inspectors to report bad teachers to heads. However, Labour says inspection teams should include local council inspectors.

The paper also says primary schoolchildren should learn foreign languages.

Leading article, page 18

extra secretarial support could land him in breach of the Nolan rules.

Appealing to Speaker Betty Boothroyd for guidance, Mr Butterfill said it was beyond the normal resources of his office to deal with the flood. Even so, he had deduced the letters were five-to-one in his favour.

About 130 organisations, including Age Concern, the Police Federation and the CBI, support the Daylight Extra campaign for the change to Central European Time. They, apparently, would be happy to provide the MP with assistance, but there is a snag. "If I were to accept that assistance there is a possibility... that I could then be seen as advocating a cause and caught by the Nolan rules," Mr Butterfill said, meaning he could not speak for his own Bill.

Pointing up the current woolly state of the anti-sleaze arrangements, the MP said he had been to see Sir Gordon Downey, the new Parliamentary Commissioner on Standards in Public Life, but he had been unable to advise him. Nor could

With MPs embarked on a Bill to allow banks to compete with the Student Loans Company, the scheme and the hardship it causes came under fire from academics in the Lords. Tory historian Lord Beloff commended the Australian practice of repayment through taxes. "That scheme works. This scheme clearly causes hardship."

Neurologist Lord Walton of Decham suggested a lump-sum payment when the ex-student could afford it, while Lord Amman, former vice-chancellor of London University, urged ministers to meet the vice-chancellors' committee to discuss changes to the system.

But education minister Lord Hensley said it was not the right moment for drastic change. Rejecting the Australian scheme, he said the tax and National Insurance system was not a suitable vehicle for debt collection. "It would impose extra and unnecessary burdens on employers and bring unnecessary complication."

Tories breaking NHS pledge, Lib Dems say

Kenneth Clarke's Budget broke the Tories' manifesto pledge to increase real resources for the health service, Simon Hughes, the Liberal Democrat health spokesman, said yesterday, writes John Rentoul.

Mr Clarke last week announced a 0.6 per cent rise in NHS funding for next year, taking inflation into account, in line with the 1992 Tory manifesto promise: "We will, year by year, increase the level of real resources to the NHS."

But the Government's own figures show that inflation in the health sector is higher than the economy as a whole and the Liberal Democrats calculate that the NHS in fact faces a 0.4 per cent cut in real resources.

Mr Hughes said: "It is now clear that the effect of the Chancellor's Budget and public spending statement on the NHS will be that, far from guaranteeing a secure future, the NHS is about to be squeezed."

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FRANCE IN REVOLT

Welfare battle lines raise the spectre of '68

Day of action could decide future of nation, and threatens to torpedo plans for single EU currency

MARY DEJEVSKY
Paris

On the streets they are talking of the revolt of 1968, the more exciting commentators are talking of the revolution of 1789 and everyone is fearful. "The week of all the peals", shouted the front page of the Paris local paper. On street corners yesterday there were knots of people, complete strangers, drawn together spontaneously - in a country whose people are not known for their sociability - by concern about the dangers of the next few days.

The depth of popular uncertainty seems hardly compatible with the sophisticated, industrially developed country that is France. But as trade union leaders prepared for today's mass protest - the fourth day of action since the first big demonstration on 10 October - there was a sense that everything was running out of control and that the country's future was at stake.

At the most basic level, a set of proposals to bring the welfare state as publically as possible into the 21st century has escalated into an "us-against-them" struggle of historic proportions. Who wins will determine the course of France, even the course of Europe, in the years to come. The turnout and the conduct of today's demonstration will be one decisive factor. The other, equally unpredictable, is the response of the government and the political establishment.

The past week has provided an object lesson in how quickly civil protest can escalate and order can deteriorate. The powerful organisation of French trade unions is one reason and their strength in the public sector is another. With seven major unions criss-crossing the public sector, action by only one or two unions can bring whole

sectors to a halt and spread rapidly to the next.

Another explanation for this abrupt escalation is what might be called the "flexible" public attitude to law and order. In the simple matter of traffic control, while epic jams block roads from dawn to well after dark and most parking controls have been lifted, police complain not just of irresponsible parking, but of increased flouting of red lights and one-way systems. You can even see cars being driven on the pavement.

Early last week, with only public transport on strike, the government's determination to stand firm looked like a plausible policy. From last Friday, with strikes escalating all the time, the government's silence was universally seen as a sign of weakness. An expected rallying call from the Prime Minister, Alain Juppé, an attempt to explain his social security reforms to the public never came. President Jacques Chirac went off to west Africa on Friday without saying anything.

Finally, on Sunday night, with Mr Juppé conferring with ministers but still incommunicado, Mr Chirac broke his silence. In an address to the French community in Benin, but clearly intended for the audience in France, he said there was a clear choice between resigned acceptance of the mounting deficit and social division on the one hand and a courageous attack on social ills on the other. "It is this course I have chosen," he said, "the way of long-postponed reforms. I am convinced that this is the right way."

Mr Chirac's words conveyed a double message: that he was intent on persevering with the reforms and that he stood by Mr Juppé. This statement, however, could harm Mr Chirac more than it benefits Mr Juppé. As the strike movement has escalated, a single demand has crystallised - for the withdrawal of the "Juppé plan". This has been accompanied by strong hostility towards Mr Juppé, which owes much to the episode with his subsidised flat.

As the pressure built up, the consensus that Mr Juppé had carefully built to support the reforms was starting to unravel.

More seriously for Mr Juppé, the cracks seem most threatening inside the Gaullist-led coalition. The leader of the biggest union (who was pilloried by her colleagues for admitting that the reforms had some good points) and the Socialist and Communist leaders, have still declined to offer full-blooded support for the protest.

In recent days, several individuals on the right with power-bases of their own and possible prime ministerial ambitions have come out of the woodwork. One of the first was the sacked economy minister, Alain Madelin, who spoke of the protest as a movement of the people against a self-perpetuating élite, and called for parliamentary elections. Another was former prime minister Edouard Balladur, who called against the emotive backdrop of De Gaulle's shrine at Colombey-les-Deux-Églises - for "dialogue" between the government and the unions. A third was Philippe Séguin, chairman of the National Assembly, who went to talk to

striking railwaymen in the eastern town of Epinal where he is mayor and promised to represent their cause "direct to Mr Chirac" - i.e. bypassing Mr Juppé. All three - Madelin, Balladur and Séguin - ensured that microphones and television cameras were on call.

With the political consensus on the right appearing to dissolve, and international markets forcing down the franc, Mr Chirac could be forced to act. But his room for manoeuvre is not great. He probably has only three choices.

The first would be to "go to the country" in the form of a referendum or parliamentary elections. In the first case, Mr Chirac would risk losing and

could suffer a severe loss of authority. In the second, the right could lose its huge majority in parliament and the number of extreme right National Front MPs could increase dramatically. Seven by-elections this past weekend, in which centre-right did very badly, offered a foretaste of the risks.

The second option would be to withdraw the Juppé plan, which would undoubtedly mean the resignation of Mr Juppé. There must be a question, however, whether it would now be possible to introduce the necessary reforms to the welfare system even by stealth. Any retreat could mean the devaluation of the franc, the end of French ambitions to join EMU,

probably the end of the whole EMU project - and possible new unrest the next time reforms were broached.

The third option would be for Mr Chirac to stand firm with Mr Juppé, increase the provision of emergency transport and services and tough it out. This would risk violence and a possible collapse of law and order. If successful, it would mean that all the dragons of opposition to reform had been slain at once and mean plain-sailing for further reforms, including the much needed fiscal reform, in future. But as of yesterday evening, with the Paris traffic static in the gathering gloom, the possibility of a Chirac-Juppé triumph looked remote.

Social insecurity fuels protest

MARY DEJEVSKY

The origin of the tidal wave of strikes in France was the proposal, set out by the prime minister, Alain Juppé, for the reform of the health and social security system.

The changes were dictated by the fast-growing indebtedness of the social security system (which also covers health care) and France's need to cut public borrowing to meet the Maastricht conditions for joining the single European currency in 1999.

The Juppé plan included:

- An additional tax of 0.5 per cent of taxable income to pay off the accumulated debt of

the social security system;

- The subordination of the system to parliamentary scrutiny and its incorporation into the national budget;
- The taxation of family allowances and other benefits hitherto untaxed;
- The postponement of a new allowance for the elderly;
- Limits on the number of doctors a patient can consult for a particular ailment, and the eventual introduction of a computerised ID card for users of the health service and benefit claimants;
- Voluntary limits on doctors prescribing, to become statutory if costs are not cut;
- And, perhaps the most inflammatory measure, the formation of a special commission to consider the pension arrangements of all public sector employees, with a view to ending the perceived advantages enjoyed by public sector employees.

However, radical the proposals were in French terms, they did not provoke an immediate general strike, or even serious misgivings, at least in official circles. Mr Juppé had been careful to square potential opponents within the ruling Gaullist coalition, the Socialist opposition, and even major union leaders.

Unfortunately, he appears not to have reckoned with public opinion, or to have realised the extent to which the single issue of the welfare state reform would become tied up with the sectional concerns of individual groups of workers.

Now, it seems that every group of public sector workers has interpreted the social security reforms as an attack on their own separate terms and conditions, and their own security. For instance, the railwaymen object to a restructuring plan which could lead to the regionalisation and likely closure of up to 6,000km of branch lines. Electricity, gas, and postal workers are worried about the impact of deregulation ordained from Brussels.

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Market fears hit franc and shares

PAUL WALLACE
Economics Editor

The franc plunged to a five-week low against the German mark yesterday and shares fell sharply as markets took fright at the social unrest in France.

So far, the French central bank has been able to avert a rise in interest rates to defend the franc. But a further slide in the franc against the mark could put the Banque de France under pressure to reverse the recent easing in interest rates. A tightening of monetary policy would intensify the recessionary forces currently gripping the French economy.

"The markets have become concerned that the dispute could put in jeopardy the plan to cut the deficit," said Avinash Persaud, currency strategist with JP Morgan.

"It is very difficult for the government to compromise without facing censure from the markets," said Stuart Thompson, international economist with Nikko Europe.

The franc fell by two and a half centimes against the mark, compared with its value at the end of last week. It closed the day at 3.4811.

French shares had a torrid day, with the CAC Index of leading stocks losing 2.5 per cent of its value. The CAC-40 index closed down 46.05, at 1,774.86.

The Bourse was also depressed by concerns that the strikes could tip the economy into recession. Takings from department stores in Paris are running at derisory levels compared with the usual pre-Christmas rush.

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Assassin 'was armed by élite soldier'

Rabin killing: Fresh evidence has cast new light on focus of inquiry

PATRICK COCKBURN
Jerusalem

Eric Schwartz, an Israeli army sergeant in an élite unit, was charged yesterday with supplying military weapons and explosives to the assassin of Yitzhak Rabin.

Sgt Schwartz, the first suspect to be formally indicted, is accused of stealing arms and equipment from the Golani Brigade and handing it over to Yigal Amir, who shot dead Rabin on 4 November. Sgt Schwartz is alleged to have known that the weapons were to be used to attack Arabs.

As well as handing over arms to Yigal and his brother Hagai Amir, Sgt Schwartz is also accused of burying a cache of stolen army property, including weapons, in the backyard of his home. After Rabin was killed he dug them up and hid them in the house and car of another army sergeant.

During a search of Amir's house after the assassination, police found slabs of military explosives which Yigal Amir's mother said she thought were bars of soap. Other arms were buried at the back of the home under a yard used as a kindergarten.

Yigal Amir and another man, Dror Adam, who is considered by police to be central to the conspiracy, were also members of the Golani brigade. Hitherto, investigations into the background of the killing have focused on a militant right-

wing student group at Bar-Ilan university and not on army service.

As he entered a military court in Haifa where he was indicted, Sgt Schwartz covered his head with his khaki military jacket so completely that he had to be guided to his seat. He said: "It is not right what is happening here." His father Naftali, a dentist from the religious suburb of Bnei Brak, said his son was innocent and that the charges against him were "heartbreaking."

The Israeli government has recently been backing away from the idea of a conspiracy behind Mr Rabin's death and four out of eight of those originally detained have been freed, though some may be charged later.

The change of tack came when Avishai Rabin, head of the extremist Eyal organisation, with which Yigal Amir was associated, was accused of being an agent of the Shin Bet domestic security police.

This enabled the right wing, which has been on the defensive since the assassination, to counter-attack the government, claiming that it was the Shin Bet agents provocateurs, and not the right, which set the stage for the killing of the prime minister. Moshe Shahal, the police minister, who had promoted the idea of a conspiracy, immediately began to back-pedal.

Nevertheless, the known facts about Yigal Amir and his group suggest that there was a



Crowds celebrate as a group of Palestinian police arrives to take over from Israelis in the West Bank town of Beit Jala

Photograph: Khaled Zighan

conspiracy to resist the implementation of the Oslo accords by armed force. This involved the theft and storage of arms. Most of the conspirators belonged to an extreme right wing group at Bar-Ilan univer-

sity. Their central plan was evidently to attack Palestinians, emulating Baruch Goldstein who shot dead 29 worshippers in a mosque in Hebron last year. But the fact that Yigal Amir was planning to murder the

prime minister was well enough known for the Shin Bet to be tipped off in June by a member of the Bar-Ilan group. It failed to act.

■ Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres will visit Cairo on Thursday for talks with Egypt's president, Hosni Mubarak - their first meeting since the funeral last month of Yitzhak Rabin.

Mr Peres will stay in Cairo for just a few hours for talks expected to focus on the Arab-Israeli peace process. Foreign Minister Amr Moussa said yesterday, Egypt has tried to act as a mediator between Israel and both the Palestinians and Syria.

IN BRIEF

King Fahd 'stroke'

London - A team of American doctors has been flown to treat King Fahd of Saudi Arabia and diplomats in the Gulf believe he may have suffered a mild stroke last week, writes Michael Sheridan. Oil prices have risen slightly on international markets on speculation that the 73-year-old King's death could set off a period of uncertainty over the succession and signal a shift in oil pricing policy, but an official medical bulletin said the results of "clinical, analytical and radiation tests" had yielded "reassuring" results.

Tipped for the top

Stockholm - Sweden's Finance Minister, Goran Persson, has agreed to be nominated as candidate for the Social Democratic party leadership and is thus likely to become the country's next prime minister, Swedish television news reported. *Reuter.*

Hostages freed

Paris - French police overpowered a gunman who took a class of 30 children and their teacher hostage at a primary school in the Paris suburb of Clichy. A squad of police commandos overpowered the man, who was apparently deranged, after two hours. *Reuter.*

Estonia looks west

Brussels - Estonia became the sixth East European nation to apply for European Union membership since the collapse of the Soviet bloc. *AP.*

Blow for UN body

Vienna - The UN said at the UN Industrial Development Organisation's annual conference that it was leaving the body. The US has long complained about too much bureaucracy and lack of efficiency in Unidoc, which funds and oversees industrial development in Third World countries. *AP.*

Vietnam date

Cotonou - Vietnam was chosen to stage the French-speaking world's next summit in 1997, four decades after France pulled out of Indochina following military defeat there, as the fifth summit of La Francophonie, the club of France and its fellow French-speakers, ended in Benin. *Reuter.*

Gifted Mandela

Pretoria - Greenland awarded South Africa's President Nelson Mandela the title of International Santa Claus of the Year and £66,000 for his work on behalf of children. *Reuter.*

US Marine 'pressured' to confess to Okinawa rape

RICHARD LLOYD PARRY
Tokyo

It was another grim day for the American military in Japan. Four of its servicemen faced serious charges in two separate trials on the island of Okinawa yesterday. One of them, a Marine private, accused the US military police of coercing him into confessing to the rape of a 12-year-old girl.

Private Rodrigo Harp, together with another Marine and a naval seaman, is charged

with abducting and raping the schoolgirl in early September. The crime provoked an uproar throughout Japan against American bases in Okinawa, forced a televised apology from President Bill Clinton, and seriously undermined the US-Japan security relationship.

At the first hearing last month, Seaman Marcus Gill pleaded guilty to all charges, while Pte Harp and the other Marine admitted helping to carry out the crime, but retracted earlier confessions of the

actual rape. Yesterday in the District Court of Naha, the Okinawan capital, Pte Harp insisted that he was manipulated into saying "what the Japanese would like to hear" by US naval police.

He said they fabricated a report for prosecutors. "When I told them what did happen, they pressured me to go in another direction," he told the three judges through an interpreter.

Earlier in the day, prosecutors in the same court called for a 13-year prison sentence for

another Marine who has admitted beating to death a 20-year-old woman with a hammer last May.

Japan has no jury system, and hearings, scheduled at the convenience of lawyers and judges, are held only one day at a time at intervals of about a month. Both cases are likely to extend into next year, prolonging the embarrassment of the US government, which is under intense pressure to reduce the 29,000 troops on Okinawa.

Pte Harp's wife, who flew

over for yesterday's hearing, became the latest in a list of Americans - including Walter Mondale, ambassador to Tokyo, William Perry, the Defense Secretary, and President Clinton - to deliver an emotional apology for her husband's crime. "I am very sorry for the behaviour of my husband to the Japanese people, her mother and father, and to the people of Japan and the US."

The statement marked a change in strategy by the defence. After the first hearing last

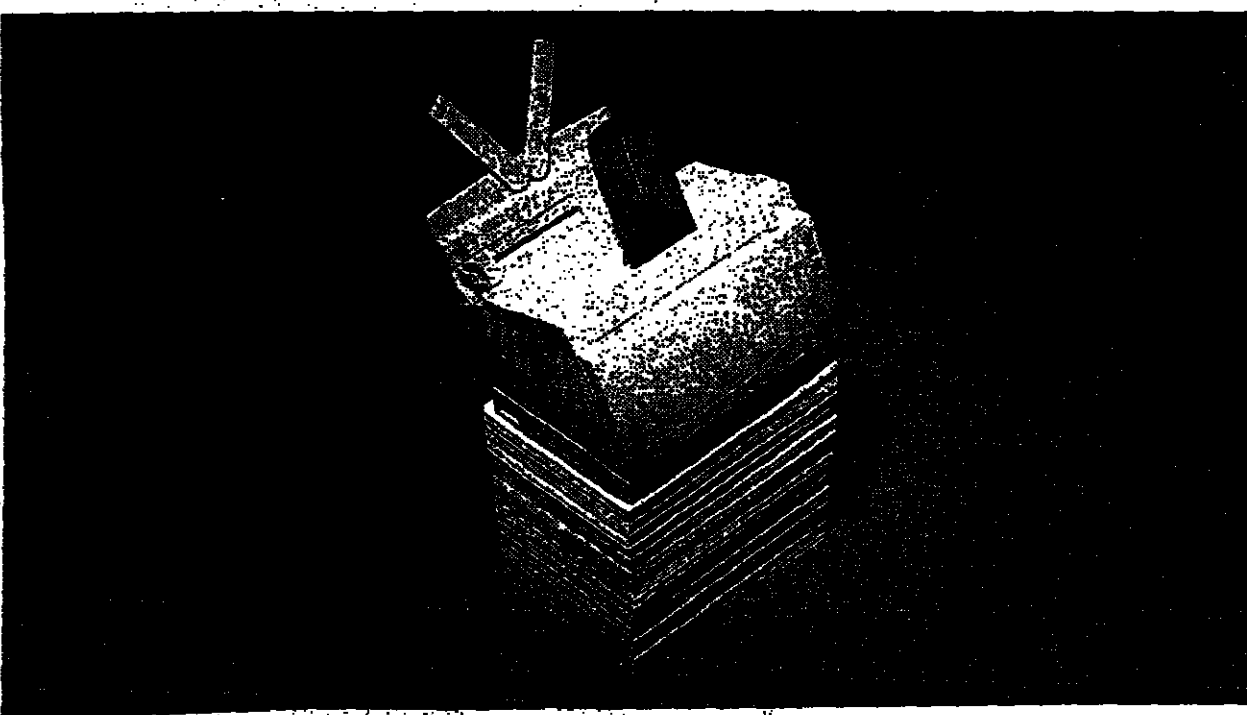
month, the families of the three men, all of whom are black, claimed that they were victims of Japanese racism. Such protestations go down badly with Japanese judges, whose sentencing is heavily influenced by guilty pleas and expressions of contrition.

Defence tactics have changed accordingly; yesterday, lawyers for the families of the accused men told reporters that they intend to pay 1.5m yen (£9,375) "apology money" to the victim and her parents. "The amount

is fairly high for the kind of compensation customary in a case like this," said Seaman Gill's lawyer, Yutaka Arakawa. "But we believe it could have a beneficial effect on the trial."

But the outcome is in little doubt. "You've got a 99.5 per cent conviction rate and a 99.8 per cent conviction rate over here," said Eric Ross, an American lawyer accompanying the families. "Look at the odds. With that kind of percentile, all you can do is mitigate the damage."

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Bosnia peace force: Severe weather conditions and poor roads pose biggest obstacles to the deployment of GIs in north-east

General Winter harries US vanguard

MMA DALY
Tuzla

The first group of US soldiers dispatched to keep the peace in Bosnia were due to arrive in Tuzla last night, where the American force is to have its headquarters. Eight or nine liaison officers, accompanied by a small reconnaissance party, are expected to reach the town by road, as the huge air base is almost permanently fog-bound in winter.

"They are due to arrive today and they are, I think, on their way by road," Captain Yahya Siddiqui, a UN spokesman in Tuzla, said yesterday. He had no details about the teams' plans, but they are likely to start setting up communications for the Tuzla headquarters and scouting around for suitable bases in the area.

Meanwhile, the first Nato troops flew to Croatia and Sarajevo from a British air force base at Bruggen in northern Germany. The 56 members of the British 7th Signals regiment who left on the first C-130 transporter were assigned to support Nato's Allied Command Europe Rapid Reaction Corps (ARRC). Three more aircraft from RAF Lyneham stopped in Bruggen to pick up more equipment, soldiers and ARRC officers based in Germany and destined for Split and Sarajevo. The ARRC has prime responsibility for running a 60,000-strong ground force implementing the Dayton accord.

It seems that several plane-loads more of Americans attached to the Nato Implementation Force (I-Fo) will finally reach Tuzla tomorrow, weather permitting. Winter will be the first obstacle to



Advance force: British and American troops disembarking at Sarajevo on a mission to set up a communications system for use by Nato

Photograph: Rikard Lema/AP

the US deployment. Apart from a semi-permanent fog, snow threatens to fall. Roads in the area are small and badly maintained, despite the efforts of the UN forces around Tuzla, and a heavy snowfall will slow traffic even more.

Under the peace plan, the Nato division in charge of north-eastern Bosnia will include 20,000 US troops, a Nordic brigade of Swedes,

Danes and Finns, a Russian brigade and a Turkish element. Lieutenant-Colonel Sverker Goranson, chief of staff for the UN Nordic battalion, based in Tuzla, will switch his blue beret for military green once Nato takes control in mid-December.

He does not foresee military trouble for the Americans, as the front lines are relatively stable, and very little land will change hands under the peace

deal. But he is concerned about the logistics of the operation: "They will face the same problems as we do: the number of miles along the confrontation line, which will take a long time to clear. If we get a tough winter, if there is snow..."

"If you look at the terrain, there are very few roads of a high standard. One runs north to south, another east to west, and all the rest are gravel."

The troops' first task, following the construction of camps near Tuzla and closer to the front line, will be to create a 4km "zone of separation" between the warring forces within 30 days. That will involve overseeing the withdrawal of all soldiers and weapons from the line and clearing mines. Then the soldiers will build fixed observation posts along the line and open crossings.

Colonel Goranson is confident I-Fo will meet its deadline, if the weather holds. Ominous snowflakes whirled down yesterday, coating the hills, but petered out into drizzle in the afternoon. He is also relatively optimistic about the Dayton deal. "Everyone is uniform [in Bosnia] is sick and tired of the war. They want something else, but they are taking very small steps because they don't really

trust the enemy. I can't blame them. I understand, they have had up to 36 ceasefires before."

He had a word of warning for the newcomers, used as they are to exerting total control over their environment: "If you have a problem, the first step is to negotiate. You don't resolve everything by slapping someone else's face... as long as they recognise that, there will be no problems."

American incursion finds Hungary open for business

ADRIAN BRIDGE
Taszar

"Hoooooahhh!" proclaims the welcome message pinned to the notice board at the entrance to the Taszar airbase in southern Hungary. The Americans are coming. In the next few months, thousands of US troops are expected to flood through Taszar on the way to Bosnia as part of the planned 60,000-strong Nato peace force.

The deployment in Hungary will be the first of such a Nato force in a former Warsaw Pact country. US forces will also be using a military base in the nearby town of Kaposvar. Under the peace accord the Nato deployment should last for a year, but many predict it could be longer.

The 2,000 people of the village of Taszar see the arrival of the Americans as a mixed blessing.

"This should give a much-needed boost to the local economy," said Zoltan Papaszi, a shopkeeper who is already stocking up with Marlboros and Jim Beam whisky.

"But some mothers are already locking up their daughters. 'I and other teenagers are looking forward to it,' said Tibor Molnar. "But our parents are worried. They think that the arrival of the GIs will spell the arrival of cocaine, AIDS, street brawls and Russian prostitutes. There is a lot of fear, especially among women and mothers."

The last time Hungary played host to foreign troops on what was always called a "temporary" basis, they stayed more than 40 years. Several Soviet bases near Taszar were closed only in 1991.

The Hungarian government, however, has embraced the

American involvement, seeing it as a stepping-stone towards membership of Nato. A parliamentary vote last month on whether to allow the deployment was passed by 312 to 1.

"We are very pleased to offer our facilities to the US forces and obviously hope that it will serve our cause," said Gabor Szentivanyi, a foreign ministry spokesman. "Of course we have already staged Nato exercises here under the Partnership for Peace programme, but they were only exercises. This time it will be for real."

The camps at Taszar and Kaposvar will be staging posts for some 20,000 US troops expected to be sent from Germany to Bosnia. Some 2,500 logistics and communications specialists will be based there.

An advance party of 25 logistics specialists has started

preparing the ground for the expected onslaught. "It's cool," said Captain Steve Shapiro, asked how it felt to be operating from a former Warsaw Pact country. His colleague at the Taszar base, Lieutenant Colonel Michael Anderson, said: "We have been very well looked after by our Hungarian hosts. The Hungarian military is every bit as professional as any I have ever dealt with in Nato. To tell you the truth, when I first got here I did not even notice the difference."

Berne — Switzerland agreed yesterday to grant passage to Nato troops and matériel bound for Bosnia, the first time the neutral republic has allowed alliance forces through its territory. The cabinet said it would permit supply flights and land transports on a case-by-case basis.

EU delays meeting on reconstruction

SARAH HELM
Brussels

European foreign ministers yesterday delayed a money-raising conference for Bosnian reconstruction, amid growing confusion about how to implement the political and civilian side of the Dayton peace deal.

The European Commission had proposed to host a pledging conference in Brussels on 20 December. The conference was to have followed the London conference this weekend when further peace implementation planning is to take place. A ceremony to sign the Dayton deal is scheduled for Paris next week.

However, in the first sign of a slow-down in momentum since the Dayton agreement was signed, EU foreign ministers said it was "too early" for a money-raising meeting.

Reconstruction and aid needs have not yet been properly identified, and there is no certainty the warring sides in Bosnia will agree to the detailed terms set out in the Dayton deal. Malcolm Rifkind, the Foreign Secretary, said in Brussels yesterday that if such a meeting were held before Christmas it would be a matter of "plucking figures out of the air."

It was crucial that the Bosnian parties were fully aware there would be no reconstruction effort unless the Dayton terms were fully adhered to, he said. "We must not send signals which confuse, but rather, which illuminate."

Discussions have already started over how the cost of the operation should be shared. The assumption is that the US would pay for one-third with the EU paying another third, and

the rest being shared by other states. However, estimates of reconstruction costs range from \$3bn (£2bn) to \$6bn, Mr Rifkind said yesterday, and far planning was still needed. He hoped the pledging conference could be held in the New Year.

Britain hopes the London conference this weekend will put in place building blocks for the civilian peace-making effort, beginning with the appointment of a civilian overlord. The official is expected to be Carl Bildt, the EU representative to former Yugoslavia.

Whoever takes on this task will face an enormous challenge, as some requirements of the Dayton accord, such as "return of refugees", are unlikely to be achieved. The holding of elections within nine months of the agreement's implementation also appears ambitious.

CHILDREN OF WAR APPEAL

£40,000 so far raised for victims of conflict

As Christmas approaches, the 'Independent' is asking readers to support four charities working to help child victims of the wars in former Yugoslavia. So far, the appeal has brought in £40,000 for the four charities:

Save the Children is focusing on children who have been separated from their families, counselling and reuniting them;

The Red Cross is running the largest humanitarian operation in the region, looking after refugee camps and linking people through its messaging network;

War Child plans to build a £2.5m music-therapy centre in Mostar, and to send urgently needed prosthetics to wounded children in the Tuzla area;

Child Advocacy International aims to bring up to 100 sick children to Britain for treatment they could not obtain at home.

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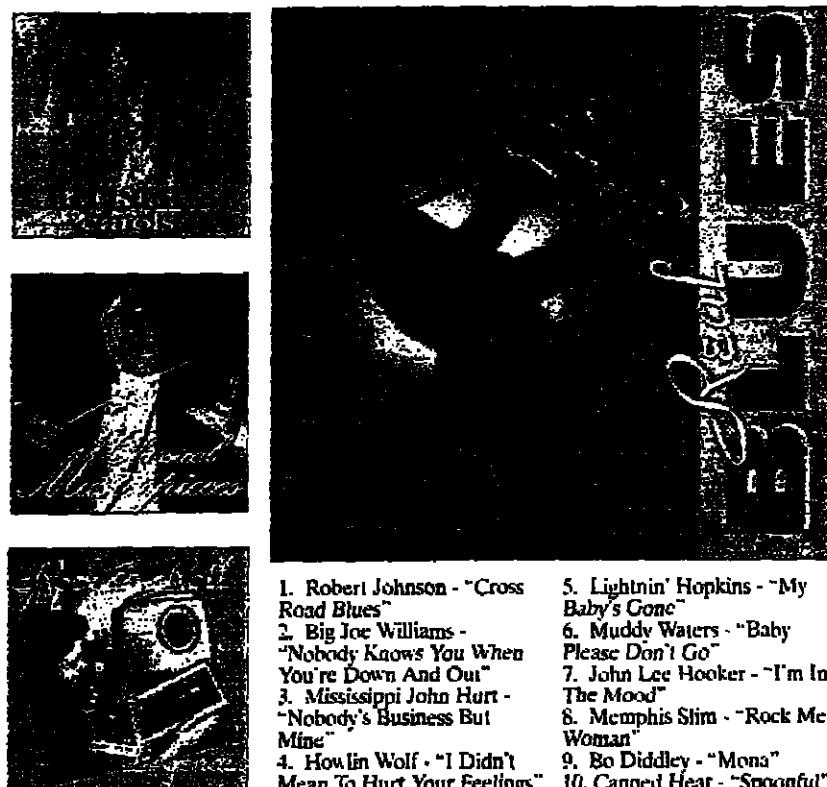
Real Blues, a collection of ten tracks performed by ten artists, is the second of four CDs we are offering you this week for only £2.99 each. The other CDs available include Christmas Carols featured yesterday and Sunday, Classical Masterpieces and Rock'n'Roll Legends which we will be covering during the rest of this week.

For £2.99 a copy including free postage and packing, Real Blues is the ideal stocking filler for Christmas. You may order as many Real Blues CDs as you wish for £2.99 each but first you must collect two differently numbered tokens.

Today we are printing Token 1. Token 2 plus the order form will be published tomorrow.

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Please allow 28 days delivery from receipt of your order. The offer closes on March 31 1996. If you would like your order delivered in time for Christmas, it must be received by 12 December 1995. The offer is subject to availability and is applicable to readers in the UK and Republic of Ireland (please send Sterling only). If you have any queries, please call: 01708 386 888



1. Robert Johnson - "Cross Road Blues"
2. Big Joe Williams - "Nobody Knows You When You're Down And Out"
3. Mississippi John Hurt - "Nobody's Business But Mine"
4. Howlin' Wolf - "I Didn't Mean To Hurt Your Feelings"
5. Lightnin' Hopkins - "My Baby's Gone"
6. Muddy Waters - "Baby Please Don't Go"
7. John Lee Hooker - "I'm In The Mood"
8. Memphis Slim - "Rock Me Woman"
9. Bo Diddley - "Mona"
10. Canned Heat - "Spoonful"

CHRISTMAS CDs

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Paying the price for Maastricht

Certain years in French history – 1870, 1871, 1968 – are embedded in Europe's collective memory in a way that is true for no other country. Should we be preparing ourselves to add 1996 to the list? As with those earlier dates, the crisis facing President Jacques Chirac and his conservative government has a significance extending beyond France's borders. It is a crisis whose course and outcome will be decisive for the direction that Europe takes in the next century. The burden of responsibility on Mr Chirac and his Prime Minister, Alain Juppé, is immense.

No single motive underlies the strikes that have paralysed France's transport systems, brought out utility and postal workers and coincided with a wave of student demonstrations. Rather the French public is nursing a collection of extremely varied grievances as well as an ill-defined but acute anxiety about the future. Labour unrest had been threatening to boil to the surface since Mr Chirac's election victory last May. However, the catalyst for the strikes was the government's decision in late October to implement an austerity programme aimed at reducing the state budget deficit and ensuring that France will qualify for the single European currency planned for launch in January 1999. Since all of Europe accepts that monetary union will never happen without French participation, it is no exaggeration to say that the fate of the most ambitious project in the European Union's history hangs on the success of the French government's economic policies.

The government will not find it easy to settle the strikes quickly while reassuring the financial markets that France will meet the Maastricht treaty's conditions for

monetary union on schedule. The centrepiece of the austerity programme is a radical redesign of the debt-ridden welfare state, involving new taxes for all but the poorest people, controls on healthcare costs, and a demand that public-sector employees work longer for a full pension. If the government makes concessions to the strikers on these points, the markets will take it as evidence that France will not meet its deficit targets and the single currency will not be launched in 1999. Yet if the government makes no concessions, the strikes will drag on, depressing the French economy and making it even more difficult for the government to fulfil the Maastricht criteria on time. Heads or tails, it seems, the government cannot win.

So far, the railwaymen, electricity and gas workers, postal staff and other strikers have made no attempt to draw an intellectual connection between their protests and wider European issues. Yet the existence of such a connection is precisely what gives France's social unrest its historic importance. Viewed from a European perspective, the troubles represent nothing less than a popular outcry against the model of Europe designed at Maastricht. It is no coincidence that similar disturbances have begun to rock Belgium, where the government is also embarked on a retrenchment programme designed to slash the budget deficit. To meet the Maastricht terms, the French government has had to postpone its fight against unemployment, now at 11.5 per cent, and ask much of the working population to bear increased job insecurity, higher taxes and reduced benefits. Now it has serious social discontent on its hands. The price being paid for Maastricht is looking ominously high.

Keeping up with the Tories

In July, when the Government proposed a system of vouchers to pay for nursery schooling, Labour dismissed the policy as a "con". At the time, we predicted that it would only be a matter of time before the party "eats its words" and advocates an adapted form of vouchers. Sure enough, with the year just out, Labour is thinking about doing just that. It could all prove to be a bit of an embarrassment for the Opposition. A sudden policy shift would be hard for many in the party to stomach, not least David Blunkett, Labour's education spokesman. Yet, as we report today, Tony Blair is preparing to gulp hard: he wants to have his own voucher policy ready for the general election.

Labour's proposed U-turn would be good news for those who support enhanced consumer power over public services. A voucher system offers parents a choice of nursery school. However, the Government's scheme is flawed. It offers parents of four-year-olds vouchers worth £1,100 to pay for nursery schooling, regardless of income. This wastes public funds because the scheme fails to target resources towards children of the low-paid.

So there is much for Labour to improve upon to combine choice with fairness. Its proposals should either means-test vouchers or make them taxable. That would be fairer and more cost-effective. Resources could then be freed to provide bigger vouchers to those eligible and extend their use to cover three- as well as four-year-olds. In short, Mr Blair should be able to trump the Government's £1,100.

That Labour is contemplating such a U-turn in its policies tells us much about a party that is desperate to win the general election. Mr Blair does not fancy opposing a scheme that is likely to prove popular with parents. He is ruthless in dumping policy that could be an electoral handicap. The party is retreating ever faster – this time it took only five months – in areas where the Tories have taken the high ground.

But has anything more profound happened to Labour than an ability to compete with the Tories? There are grounds for hope. A switch to supporting vouchers would be a vote for consumerism against producerism in the public sector. So are Labour's plans to be unveiled today for a crusade to raise teaching standards. The voucher scheme is also a move away from protecting the public sector against private competition: parents would not be bound to spend their vouchers in council nurseries.

If the logic of this policy reversal was pursued to other areas then the days when state cash automatically went to state-owned schools and hospitals would be numbered. This would do for Labour policy on public services what the revision of Clause Four did for nationalism.

Such a change would be a brave and dramatic departure, placing Tony Blair's party alongside those who use publicly funded services rather than those who provide them. If Labour took this step, we could at last say the party was innovating and not simply catching up with the Tories.

ANOTHER VIEW Robin Teverson

A fair deal on fishing

The Independent is correct to highlight the bleak future faced by fishermen in Newlyn. From my vantage point in the Fisheries Committee of the European Parliament, I have seen all too clearly how their plight is shared by skippers from every corner of Britain. But we cannot just bemoan their fate or use it as an excuse for the crude re-nationalisation of fisheries policy. There are alternatives.

We need to recognise that the current system is set to – quite literally – consume itself. Unlike farmers, fishermen have little opportunity to diversify. Faced with a threat to the stocks from other fleets, they are left to grab what they can, while they can. Lectures from high about sustainability do not help when the fishermen are concerned about surviving the next month, never mind the next 20 years.

Resolving that problem means creating a community of common interest among all skippers within a fishery – a system whereby collective action can be seen to further individual prosperity. The best way of doing that is not to nationalise fishing policy but to regionalise it.

While British fishermen may be suspicious of Brussels, they are right to be equally uncertain about depending on Whitehall. Nationalising fisheries policy would merely accentuate the present situation where the various fishing fleets are set at each other's throats. It would benefit those countries with aggressively

supportive governments and penalise those with more supine backup – notably our own.

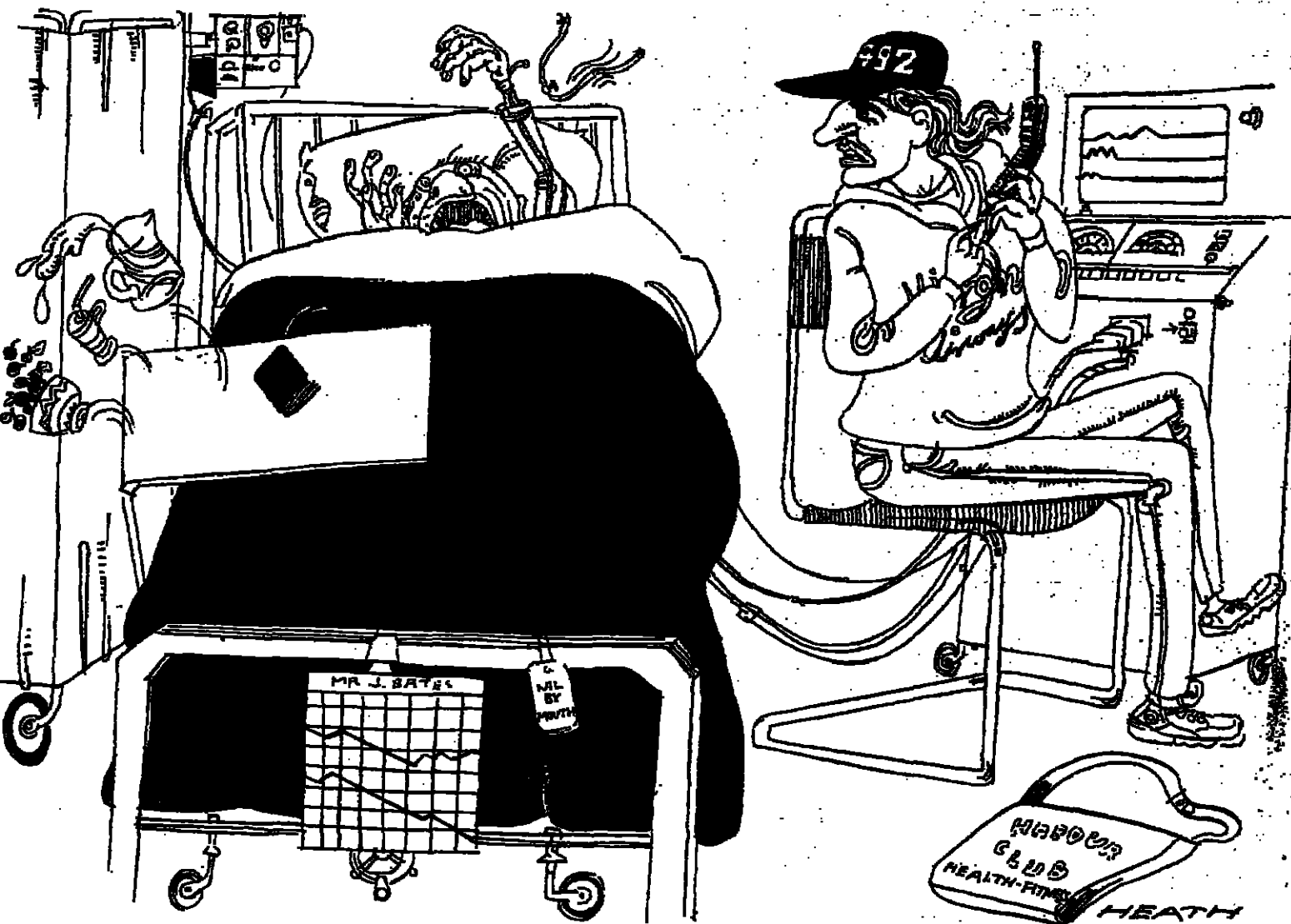
Instead we should create regional fishing bodies – for example, one for the Irish Sea fishermen, one for the North Sea and so on. The arguments would not instantly disappear and the fish stocks would not magically reappear. But it would bring together all those with directly shared interests and it would bypass governments that tend to make agreement on fishing part of broader package deals. In the UK that has too often meant selling out our fishermen.

Fishing may not be a big industry in Britain, but it is vital to the coastal communities that depend on it.

At the Madrid summit this month, Europe's leaders will name the date for the start of next year's long awaited Inter-Governmental Conference. Its urgent task has become the capture of the citizen's heart and mind for Europe. We all applaud that.

Rather than the usual focus on qualified majority voting, we could perhaps spare a little time for some of the small things in life, things about which we feel strongly and to which we can relate. Our fishing industry is one of these. Then maybe Newlyn, Looe, Padstow and Mablethorpe, too, can have a working future.

The writer is Liberal Democrat MEP for Cornwall and West Plymouth.



Would you please be quiet! I'm talking to a tabloid!

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Home Office adds insult to injury over lone child refugees

From Ms Sandra Singer

Sir: The article "Children sent alone to seek asylum in the UK" (4 December) highlights a humanitarian situation that the British Red Cross has been concerned about for some time.

Many young people arrive in Britain alone, as asylum-seekers or refugees, because of conflict in their country of origin. They often lose contact with their families because communication systems break down in war zones or because they are scared that trying to reach them will bring unnecessary attention to relatives living in sensitive situations.

Consequently, contact with family members may be lost for several years, or even forever.

Next week the British Red Cross launches a special database that will hold information on unaccompanied minors. This means that if any inquiries about a child in the UK are received from family members, via the Red Cross International Mes-

sage or Tracing Servicing Services, contact can be restored more easily. The database will work under the same neutrality that governs all Red Cross activity and the information will be strictly confidential; it will not be accessible to statutory authorities or other agencies.

Yours faithfully,
SANDRA SINGER
Head of International Welfare
British Red Cross
London, SW1
4 December

From Ms Frances Webber

Sir: The Home Office minister, Tim Kirkhope, denounces as "immoral" the actions of parents who send their children alone to Britain to claim asylum. He has considered the immorality of the British Government's actions that have prevented those parents from bringing their children themselves? By visa controls and fines on carers, the Home Office has made legal travel to Britain for

asylum well-nigh impossible. Faced with costs of thousands of dollars per person for the forged documents or illegal travel required to escape from hell (whether in Somalia, Sri Lanka, Nigeria or Algeria), most can't afford it. To castigate families in such dire straits as immoral for trying at least to get their children out adds insult to the massive injury done to refugees, and to the concept of asylum, by Mr Kirkhope's predecessors over the past decade.

The real agenda behind this manufactured outrage is to provide bogus justification for the most draconian assault on refugees ever: the Lilley-Howard package of Bill, regulations and orders that abandon victims of war, civil war and oppression to homelessness and destitution, and reduce asylum rights to hollow mockery.

Yours faithfully,
FRANCES WEBBER
Two Garden Court Chambers
London, EC4

From Mr David Blake

Sir: What utter desperation must drive parents to send their children, alone, to foreign countries: perhaps never to see them again. They obviously foresee no hope whatsoever for them at home. But, goodness me, the intolerable annual cost to the British taxpayer is almost two-thirds of the average annual fees paid over the past five years to external consultants by the NHS.

It is heartening to read that the Home Office is planning a crackdown on this "immoral" practice by seeking agreements with some of the main countries involved to stem the flow of unaccompanied children. Some of the regimes concerned will undoubtedly do this very effectively, and they even achieve a final solution to the problem. Whatever happened to Winston Churchill's "open door"?

Yours faithfully,
DAVID BLAKE
Stirling

Stop trading with Burma

From Ms Mairead Maguire

Sir: The British Government, through the Department of Trade and Industry, is holding a seminar in London on Tuesday this week aimed at stimulating interest in investment and trade in Burma. This seminar is the prelude to a DTI trade mission to Rangoon in February next year.

Despite the welcome release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi from six years of house arrest, there have been no other positive changes in Burma. In fact, under the brutal State Law and Order Restoration Council, hundreds of political prisoners remain in jail, including MPs elected in 1990, and there have been further arrests. Serious human rights abuses continue, many of them directly linked to energy and tourism projects. Contrary to the British Government's claim that "trade access provides a degree of leverage", increased trade and investment with the military regime only exacerbates suffering in Burma.

The DTI's promotion coincides with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's firm request that overseas investors should "wait" until peace and democracy have been restored to Burma. In the US, selective purchasing legislation is being adopted by city and state councils who refuse to support the regime.

The recent events in Nigeria are a reminder of the consequences of investing in countries with ruthless military regimes. Unfortunately, this is a lesson that the British Government appears to prefer to ignore. Instead of doing business with the generals, we should be looking at ways to encourage the regime to stop its business of repression.

Yours faithfully,
MAIREAD MAGUIRE (Nobel Laureate), Archbishop Desmond Tutu (Nobel Laureate), GLENYS KNOCK (MEP), SIR DAVID STEEL, MP, YVETTE MAHON (Burma Action Group), PATRICIA BARNETT (Tourism Concern)
London, N1
4 December

High-level loo

From Mrs Edmond Broughton-Adderley

Sir: Baroness Thatcher's loo and I are both mortified at my grandson Alasdair's ill-chosen (one might say treacherous) remarks about it at Lucinda Lambton's party (Vicky Ward's diary, 28 November).

High on a pedestal in my drawing room, it has brought me fame, if not fortune. Three appearances on the box (£25 a go!). The late Lord Bath (a keen collector of Thatcher memorabilia) asked if he could use it. Horrified, I told him those days were past. Thwarted, he taunted me, saying he had a roll of her loo paper (unused). I could hardly speak for envy.

The fact that some visitors don't spot it is because it is modestly hidden by greenery. It was Selina Scott who originally suggested it should be used as a *lardière*. Lately, my chastity belt and Henry VIII's codpiece may have enlisted more attention, but the loo will, I hope, still be an object of veneration to my great grandchildren.

Yours truly,
EDMOND BROUGHTON-ADDERLEY
London, SW3

Is the First Lady a Stepford Wife?

From Ms Sue Slipman

Sir: I was one of those who, along with Tessa Blackstone (letter, 2 December), participated in the meeting with Hillary Clinton and know that the American embassy expected Polly Tynbee to write about it.

The debate occasionally broke through the social niceties to confront real issues. In one such moment, I asked her why single mothers had become the symbols at the heart of the moral and social debates and the male backlash both here and in the US. Her response was professional and disappointing. It was a well-rehearsed reply, as if for an audience of political foes. It had more to do with avoiding banana skins than engaging with the issues and left no one in a position to probe further.

I do not blame her for this. The pressures upon her have been intense. I felt she was an intelligent woman constrained in a role she would not have chosen for herself.

To accuse her of being a Stepford Wife ("What have they done to Hillary?" 30 November) may be a little unfair, but to see her as fulfilling her destiny in her own right is a lot naïve.

May I please also use this opportunity, for the sake of my colleagues, to point out that I

am the director of the London TEC Council, not the "National TEC Council", although I am grateful that Polly Tynbee wanted to promote me.

Yours sincerely,
SUE SLIPMAN
Director
London TEC Council
London, SE1
1 December

From Ms Sandra Andolara
Sir: It was interesting to read of Hillary Clinton being referred to by Polly Tynbee as a "Stepford Wife". Mrs Clinton may be a lot of things, but a Stepford Wife she definitely isn't – ask anyone in the Republican Party, the Chinese government, the American Bar Association or the Nixon Watergate Impeachment Committee – the list is endless.

It is sad and pathetic that someone of her intellect, integrity and rare good intentions can be maligned by so many people – first, being thought of as a raving feminist, and then as a cookie-baking Barbara Bush wannabe. Male politicians change tack every day – it's called public relations. It is another sad fact that one does not win votes from the fiery right moral majority in the US by endorsing equal rights for women and children, and government-subsidised health pro-

grammes. She is only playing the agency at their own game and winning quite nicely by all accounts.

Yours faithfully,
SANDRA ANDOLARA
London, NW4
1 December

From Ms Brenda Brod

Sir: Accepted that Hillary Clinton's homily "A view from the White House" is best ignored, the remainder of Polly Tynbee's article addresses not the question of how Hillary can best use her formidable talents but demonstrates how preconceived ideas can flatten a personality as dynamic as Hillary's, even before she has been allowed to speak.

The Stepford Wife image is asked. Isn't what Mrs Clinton asked for – an invitation to converse with English women who might hold similar interests to hers – exactly how all women gather information?

As working women, with children and concern for the future fabric of society, don't we all have the same questions concerning education, health, violence and, yes, single mothers? If Ms Tynbee was dissatisfied with the level of discussion, why not do what any good reporter does – ask better questions?

Yours sincerely,
BRENDA BROD
London, NW3

Piling the blame on carpet-makers

From Mr Hugh G. W. Wilson

Sir: The caption under the photograph of the River Stour accompanying your report on allegations of river pollution ("Industry carpeted as pollution poses fresh threat to otter", 29 November) states that the river is "polluted by waste wool". Wool as such has little to do with it and is not the only fibre used in making carpets these days. The tiny quantities of sheep dip residuals cause the problem, and many of those showing up in the Stour arise upstream, probably from farm run-offs.

For a long time, no carpet firm has been allowed to let any industrial effluent run off directly into the river. They discharge into the sewage system

and are subject to tough regulations over what can be accepted at the sewage works. Even though some of the materials causing concern to environmentalists are already at levels so dilute as sometimes to be at the bottom edge of detectability, the local carpet industry has been co-operating closely with the water authorities over what further improvements might be made. Although the water quality of the Stour is not yet all it could be, at least it is not identifiably worse downstream of Kidderminster than above. I hear that great efforts are now being made to improve the quality upstream.

Yours faithfully,
HUGH G. W. WILSON
Executive Director
British Carpet Manufacturers' Association
London, W1
30 November

A dash of Nash

From Mr Peter Hill

Sir: Polly Tynbee, in explaining why women vote Tory ("Women Like Us don't vote Labour", 30 November) might have turned to Ogden Nash for two reasons:

Women would rather be right than reasonable
and
Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose.

Yours truly,
PETER HILL
Tanworth-in-Arden, Warwickshire

Letters should be addressed to Letters to the Editor, and include a daytime telephone number. (Fax: 0171-293 2056; e-mail: letters@independent.co.uk) Letters may be edited for length and clarity. We are unable to acknowledge unpublished letters. Back issues of the Independent are available from Historic Newspapers, 0800 06609.

Royal role models

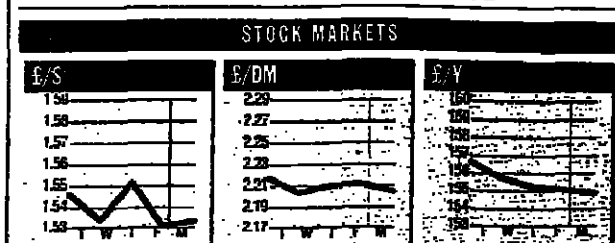
From Mr Walter Paul

Sir: So, Her Majesty the Queen and the Prince of Wales will discuss the Princess of Wales's new role as a roving ambassador for Britain ("PM and Queen to discuss Diana's role", 4 December). I hope they remember that the Princess Royal has been doing quite a good job in that capacity for a few years now, especially with Save the Children, as has the Duchess of Kent, with terminally ill children.

Maybe not a lot of people know that, as the two ladies have probably not had the chance to arrange a television interview with the BBC, or telephone the *News of the World* for a little chat.

Yours faithfully,
WALTER PAUL
Glasgow
4 December

MARKET SUMMARY



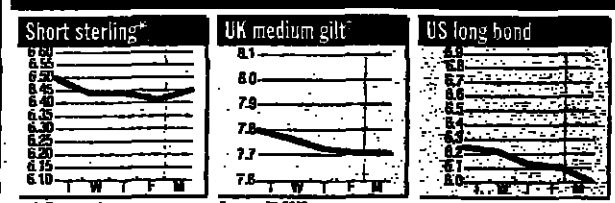
Index	Close	Day's change	Change (%)	1995 High	1995 Low	Yield (%)
FTSE 100	3669.70	-10.70	-0.3	3690.40	2954.20	3.91
FTSE 250	3969.10	+5.40	+0.1	3991.30	3300.90	3.48
FTSE 350	1817.90	-3.60	-0.2	1821.50	991.00	3.82
FT Small Cap	1954.26	+1.83	+0.1	1993.11	1678.61	3.31
FT All Share	1791.78	-3.17	-0.2	1794.95	1489.28	3.78
New York	5100.86	+13.73	+0.3	5105.92	4693.70	2.30
Tokyo	18897.37	+84.27	+0.4	19884.04	14485.41	0.80
Hong Kong	9940.63	+78.08	+0.8	10032.93	6967.93	3.90
Frankfurt	2252.16	-8.50	-0.4	2317.01	1910.96	3.99
Paris	1774.86	-46.05	-2.5	2017.27	1700.58	3.25
Milan	8804.00	-59.00	-0.7	9911.00	8804.00	1.79

*New Jones Index & Graph at 1330 hours

MAIN PRICE CHANGES

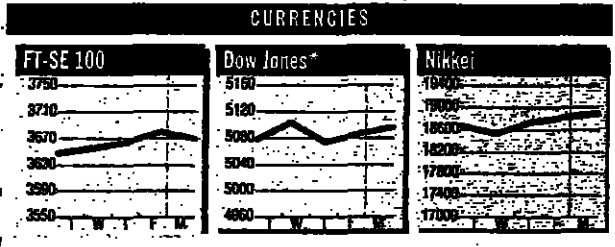
Rises	Falls
Ladbrokes Group 159 16 11.2	British Sky Bld 397 31.5 7.4
Racal Electronics 270 7 2.7	Eastman Kodak 85 6 6.9
Sin Wales Elec 1165 57 5.1	Caltech Group 578 24 4.0
Welsh Water 703 28.6 4.2	BTL 367.5 14.5 3.8
Tratnor House 25 1 4.2	RMC Group 1017 38 3.4

INTEREST RATES



Index	1 Month	3 Month	6 Month	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year
UK	6.69	6.31	7.52	8.54	7.68	8.50
US	5.88	5.50	5.84	7.84	6.08	7.94
Japan	0.56	0.38	2.66	4.66	-	-
Germany	4.13	3.81	6.09	7.31	6.81	-

CURRENCIES



Index	Yesterday	Change	Year Ago	Index	Yesterday	Change	Year Ago
\$ (London)	1.5334	0.29c	1.5591	£ (London)	0.6521	-0.12	0.641
£ (New York)	1.5345	0.30c	1.557	¥ (New York)	0.8517	-0.13	0.842
DM (London)	2.2051	-0.09p	2.4542	DM (London)	1.4381	-0.70p	1.5741
¥ (London)	154.927	-0.184	155.471	¥ (London)	101.036	-0.295	100.36
£ Index	82.60	unch	80.1	£ Index	93.8	-0.20	96.23

Index	Yesterday	Change	Year Ago	Index	Yesterday	Change	Year Ago
Oil Brent	17.425	+0.29	16.15	RPI	149.8	+3.2%	2.4%
Gold	386.30	-0.25	376.7	GDP	106.6	2.1%	4.3%
Gold £	251.98	-0.06	241.49	Base Rates	%	6.75	5.25

IN BRIEF

Amec rejects latest Kvaerner offer

The besieged construction group Amec yesterday rejected a 90p share offer for its preference shares from Norwegian rivals Kvaerner. The lower than expected cash offer came just under a week after Kvaerner bid 100p a share for Amec's ordinary shares. It takes the value of the bid to £358m against expectations of £375m. Kvaerner is offering an alternative of 8.125 per cent unsecured bonds valued at around 92p per preference share which it said provided shareholders with "a substantial uplift in the credit backing to their investment". Amec described the offer as inadequate.

Market shrugs off monetary growth

The monetary base rose by 0.7 per cent in November, taking the annual rate of growth up to 5.6 per cent. The rise gives Eddie George some cause for alarm if he wishes to resist a call by Kenneth Clarke for a cut in interest rates when they meet on December 13. But according to Nigel Richardson, head of bond research at Yamachi International, "the markets shrugged it off because it was seen as carrying neither inflationary implications nor policy consequences."

London in the lead

The City of London is confirmed as Europe's leading financial centre - but the US investment banking giants that operate there outranked the Brits in the latest investment analysts' survey, out yesterday, writes John Willcock. Stephen Parker, managing director of Tempest Consultants, which conducted the 1995 Ranking of European Larger Company Investment Analysts among Europe's leading fund managers and finance directors, said there was "some amazement" in the City about the results. "It's one thing to hear about it, it's another to see it set down in black and white. The big US investment banks have organised their research teams along pan-European lines for some time now, and this shows through, Mr Parker said.

Racal confirms BR telecoms talks

Racal confirmed talks with British Rail on the acquisition of its telecommunications arm. British Rail Telecommunications is thought to be worth £100m to £150m and is one of BR's biggest non-passenger operations. Other bidders are believed to have included Nynex and NTL, which operates ITV's transmitters.

Lower expectations for Williams

The locks to heaters group Williams Holdings warned that second half margins on its gas fires and electric blankets would be hit by the unusually warm weather. The group pointed the market towards the lower end of full-year forecasts, which range between £225m to £235m, as it unveiled its third quarter trading review. The flotation of Cortworth last month would add an exceptional profit of around £9m, but overall the company said trading had changed little since its last update.

Individual share stakes worth £150bn

The proportion of shares owned by individuals fell continuously between 1963 and 1989, and since then has held at around 20 per cent, excluding unit trusts. Individuals' total share holdings in UK companies were worth £154.6bn last year, the highest value ever recorded by Central Statistical Office surveys. A report published yesterday on the distribution of share ownership in UK listed companies shows the value of shares as £762bn.

Defensive manoeuvre: Analysts unimpressed by break-up plan, while the slanging match continues

Forte announces plan to split hotels from restaurants

JOHN SHEPHERD

Forte yesterday proposed a radical break-up of its hotels and roadside restaurant businesses into two parts as a main plank of its defence against the hostile £3.3bn takeover bid from Granada. The plans involve floating the restaurant operations, encompassing Little Chef, Happy Eater, Welcome Break and the Cote France motorway service stations, as a separately listed company. Current shareholders in Forte would then own one share in the restaurants business and one share in the hotels operation, which would continue to be headed by Sir Rocco Forte. The company also plans to dispose of its 68 per cent, but limited voting, stake in the Savoy group, which it has tried unsuccessfully to take fully under its wing after 13 years of bitter fighting. Analysts reckoned that the restaurants business could be worth between £1bn to £1.2bn. They were unsure, however, how much of Forte's £3.3bn of debts would be apportioned to the business.

Investors and leisure analysts said the plans alone, and the disclosure that Roberto Mendoza, vice-chairman of JP Morgan, had been recruited to the defence team, were unlikely to be enough to stop Forte slipping into the clutches of Granada. Shares in Forte fell 4p to 338p, while Granada, which has offered four of its own shares plus £23.50p in cash for every 15 shares in the target, gained 2p to 651p.

The Forte defence plan will be presented to Forte's main institutional shareholders in Scotland today. Mr Robinson believes Sir Rocco and his team are wasting their time. "It's a huge mistake. We think people will clearly see that," Mr Robinson said. "Suddenly in the last 10 days it [demerger] all swings into action, and has apparently been on the cards for months. It seems odd to me."

Sir Rocco said SBC Warburg, the merchant bank, had been formulating the proposal for months and in August "we really took a decision. We would probably have announced it next April with our full-year results."

Sir Rocco, who declined to give specific financial details of the plans, added: "The demerger is a natural progression of what we've been doing in the last three years. When the White Hart and US Travelodge chain of hotels are sold, we will be down to two businesses - hotels and restaurants."

"We will be the largest pure hotel company listed on the Stock Exchange. We will be a very sexy vehicle."

His views were lost on Mr Robinson who, it emerged yesterday, saw his salary rise 22 per cent to £700,000 last year. He said: "When we heard it [the demerger plan] we were pleased about it because it highlights the value of the offer very clearly to shareholders."

"People think of demerging conglomerates as a good thing, but catering and hotels is marriage stuff. The similarities are

Gerry Robinson, on Forte's plans: 'Like the captain of the Titanic saying "we really planned to hit the iceberg"'

Gerry Robinson, chief executive of Granada, also dismissed Forte's plans to demerge as being "like the captain of the Titanic saying 'we really planned to hit the iceberg'". Sir Rocco, Forte's chairman and chief executive, said the plans had been around for some time. "The bid from Granada enabled us to accelerate our strategy. He [Mr Robinson] has done a good job marketing our restaurant business."

Hogg and Huismans go in Courtaulds shake-up

TOM STEVENSON
Deputy City Editor

Courtaulds will lose its chairman and chief executive next year in the biggest shake-up at the chemicals group since it demerged its textiles operation in 1990. Sir Christopher Hogg and Sipko Huismans will step down after the company's annual meeting in July. Sir Christopher's departure had been expected for some time. He is 59 and has been a non-executive director since stepping down as chief executive in 1991, after 12 years in the job. But Sipko Huismans, Courtaulds' Dutch-born, South African-educated chief executive, had been expected to stay another couple of years. One analyst said: "I am a little surprised that Mr Huismans decided to throw in the towel, but he was obviously not the type to be non-executive chairman. The City view is that he has been too optimistic and failed to deliver over the last few years, but I don't think he was forced out."

The top jobs go to Sir David Lees, until recently chairman and chief executive of engineer

GKN, who takes the chair, and Gordon Campbell, a Courtaulds man all his working life and currently Mr Huismans' deputy. Explaining his decision to go early, Mr Huismans said: "It would have been unreasonable for the new chairman and I to have to learn to live together for maybe only 12 or 18 months. It is an almost predictable consequence of the Cadbury-imposed split that the two would leave together."

Mr Huismans has been openly critical of the recommendations of the Cadbury Committee, which brought him

into conflict with Postel (now Hermes), the Post Office and BT pension fund. Postel voted against his re-election to Courtaulds' board because of his unwillingness to reduce the duration of a three-year rolling contract.

The two events are understood to be unrelated. One reason Mr Huismans gave for his departure was that, at 55, he is still young enough to take on another high-profile job.

Although there will be no formal severance payment, he is believed to be negotiating compensation to make good the

shortfall in his Courtaulds pension. It is not thought there will be other compensation for loss of his salary which amounted to £328,000 in the year to March 1995. Sir Christopher was paid £105,000 as chairman last year. Mr Huismans also has 195,000 share options although only 50,000 of these would be worth exercising at the current share price. The strike prices of the remaining options range as high as 555p, compared with yesterday's close of 395p. Mr Huismans and Sir Christopher have spent most of their working lives with Courtaulds.

Moore's family 'backs new bid'

NIGEL COPE

Sir David Alliance, the Coats Vipeles and N Brown chairman who is leading a £1.1bn offer for the Littlewoods group, is believed to have secured support from key members of the controlling Moore's family as speculation grew that rival offers were on the way. Sir David met Littlewoods chairman Leonard van Geest in London where he confirmed his offer to buy the entire group in partnership with Iceland, the frozen food chain. The discussions were described as "friendly" and "constructive" and further meetings with Littlewoods executives are scheduled for next week. Littlewoods yesterday advised shareholders to wait for a review of the company's options which is expected to take some months. Sir David's offer will probably be discussed at the company's emergency meeting on Thursday along with the rival £1.2bn offer from Barry Dale, the company's former chief executive. It appears increasingly unlikely that the family will support the Dale bid. Donatella Moore - the daughter of Peter Moore, who sold his stake in the company last year - is acting as a link between Sir David's consortium and other members of the family. She and her brother Alexis speak for a significant percentage of the group's shares and are thought to be willing to listen to offers. James Stenson Taylor, another family member of the board, is believed to favour focusing the company on the high street stores - and possibly the football pools - rather than home-shopping which Sir David is keen to buy and merge with his N Brown group. If it is not possible to gain control of the whole group, it is understood that Sir David will attempt to buy only the home shopping division. Investment Column, page 22

Labour queries Young pay-off

DAVID HELLIER

The Labour Party yesterday demanded to know whether Lord Young of Graffham, the former chairman of Cable & Wireless, had received any remuneration from the company offshore where it would be subject to lower rates of interest than in the UK. As the mystery over Lord Young's pay-off negotiations continues - Lord Young is reported to be pursuing a £2.5m pay-off in spite of earlier claims that he had no contract with the company - Nigel Griffiths, Labour's consumer affairs spokesman, wrote to Ian Lang, President of the Board of Trade, asking him to investigate the propriety of a letter apparently signed by the late Lord Sharp, then chairman of Cable & Wireless, to Lord Young on his appointment. Cable & Wireless yesterday said it could not comment on the subject of Lord Young's pay-off. It dismissed stories of offshore tax payments or a secret letter as "sheer speculation". One of Lord Young's friends said yesterday that discussions were going on. "But they do not involve a letter from Lord Sharp," he said. The Sharp letter has become the centre of controversy since Lord Young, who was deposed two weeks ago as chairman, has reportedly referred to it to support his pay-off negotiations. Yesterday Mr Griffiths wrote to Mr Lang at the DTI saying that he was "very concerned about reports of the contract which Lord Young, the former chairman of Cable & Wireless, claims to hold."

"I understand that this constitutes a letter from the late Lord Sharp, the terms of which do not seem to have been revealed to other board members or shareholders in the company."

Accountants say taxpayers in Hong Kong would broadly expect to pay 15 per cent in tax at higher income levels.

Lloyd's names face 'slow ruin'

JOHN EISENHAMMER
Financial Editor

Hard-line names yesterday said many faced slow ruin at the hands of the Lloyd's rescue plan, instead of its claim to offer release from their past traumas, and that the best solution would be to close the insurance market to new business. The names, who represent some of the hardest hit, presented yesterday a 24-page alternative to Lloyd's own reconstruction and renewal plan, arguing that their own proposals take more account of the interests of those individuals who have suffered enormous losses in recent years and less of the professionals keen to keep the insurance market functioning. The Lloyd's plan to hive off all its old policies into a giant reinsurance company called Equitas, into which names would be required to pay a final premium to end their liabilities, was criticised as running the serious risk of making matters worse for too many long-suffering names. Alan Porter, a leading names activist, said: "The Equitas route is not a guarantee of giving names finality. Rather, it is in danger of ruining another 5,000 names in an unnecessary way."

The key criticism of the alternative proposals, presented yesterday by the Lloyd's Names Associations' Working Party, is that Equitas, in the form of the premium demands to names, crystallises immediately some £3bn of losses. This will place an unacceptable drain on names' financial resources, the document stated.

The alternative names also cast doubt on the ability of Lloyd's to quantify the total losses that all the insurance market's old policies could be liable for, and whether Equitas can be adequately reserved. They also question whether, in the light of the difficulties afflicting negotiations with a whole range of insurance market participants, enough money can be found to make it attractive for names to settle on Lloyd's terms.



Sexy vehicle: Sir Rocco Forte sees the split as natural. Photograph: Geraint Lewis

huge. Everything about mid-market hotels and roadside restaurants from buying through to marketing goes together. It is a surprising and wrong move to make."

What Mr Robinson has to say, however, carries little weight with Sir Rocco, who struggled to confine his thoughts to business rather than to personal attacks on his

opposite number. Sir Rocco said: "The values we are creating are higher than his highest offer. There is a limit to what his shareholders will go to."

Comment, page 21

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COMMENT

Though this might be a step in the right direction, what we know of these plans so far is not going to do the trick

Forte's adopted strategy follows the fashion

For a company that claims to have been thinking seriously of a radical breakup for some months, Forte is remarkably thin on detail about the de-merger of its restaurants chain and other disposals. It seems doubtful the group would ever voluntarily have ceded empire in this way had it not been for Granada's hostile £3.2bn takeover bid. Disposal of the Savoy stake, which by Sir Rocco Forte's own admission is not going to be easy, is a reversal of what Forte has been striving for over many years. While it is true that this particular crusade was a strategy inherited from his father, Lord Forte, it seems hard to believe Sir Rocco would have called off the 13-year siege without the Granada rocket.

But let's be charitable and assume this is not the panic reaction it appears. Is this the right way forward – and is it enough to see off the Manchester invaders? Little Chef, Happy Eater and Welcome Break would together make an excellent standalone company, but they would probably be worth more in a series of trade sales. Granada itself might be in the queue if it were not bidding for the whole shebang. Indeed, as Granada is quick to point out, the whole concept of this demerger is flawed.

Breaking up is the fashionable thing these days. There are plenty of investment bankers making a good living out of unbundling the deals they set up in the 1980s and before. Fine, when it involves tractors and biscuits, but hotels and catering? Surely

these are one and the same business? The demerger strategy might have been a little more believable had it been the up-market hotels that were being groomed for a separate sale.

To demerge the Little Chels from the Travelodge, many of which are on the same sites, seems commercially a much more contentious approach. Furthermore, it goes against the play Forte itself made of the expansion of Travelodge three years ago.

No, though this might be a step in the right direction, what we know of these plans so far is not going to do the trick. The bid is far from over yet and it would be wrong to think of this as Sir Rocco's last throw of the dice. Forte's defence document – expected to concentrate on trying to reverse the perception that Sir Rocco has been a failure as a chief executive – has yet to be published and it can be reasonably assumed it will add more twists to the tale. A full revaluation of property assets and a profits forecast is even further down the line. Nonetheless, Forte still has an uphill struggle judging by soundings taken among its big shareholders.

Leaving Courtaulds in better shape

When chief executives leave their posts early – without another job to go to and a stack of out of the money options – the reasons presented through official lines rarely

hear a great deal of scrutiny. The old balance about wanting to spend time on other interests or their families is simply code for poor old Smithers not being up to the job.

On the face of it the justification for Sipko Huismans' early exit from Courtaulds raises the usual eyebrows – it looks just a little too neat and well-rehearsed to hold much water. It wouldn't be fair, the line goes, for the new chairman, Sir David Lees, to have to work out a modus vivendi with abrasive old Huismans – only to lose him after 18 months and have to start all over again with his replacement.

But this time the cynics may be looking too hard for a story. If any FT-SE 100 chief executive could say in all seriousness, "it's a bit early but I'm only 53 and I'll see what turns up", Sipko Huismans is he. This is a man whose desk faces out of the window because he likes to see the sky and the grass. There is no point, he has always maintained, in having a bit of money if you don't spend it – in his case on a yacht and a couple of houses. And if he believes that, with his mentor Sir Christopher Hogg moving on, he might find it hard to get on with the new man Sir David Lees, he is probably right. Sir David, patrician, diplomatic, financial, is the antithesis of Sipko, the roly-poly rebel with a passionate belief in Britain's future in Europe and monetary union. Who can blame him for thinking that sort of courtship too much like hard work.

In some ways he leaves a company in better shape than he found it, better focused and with a bright star in the new wonder fibre Tencel. But the new team has a job to do. Since the textiles arm was spun off in 1990, Courtaulds shares have underperformed the rest of the market by a fifth. More worrying, they have lagged boring old ICI by 10 per cent.

A successful marriage second time around

The day after Swalec was privatised five years ago, Welsh Water snapped up 10 per cent of the shares, and began making indecent proposals about collaboration. A sparky Swalec fought off the wet kiss and the reservoir bosses eventually bowed out of the shareholder register, bloody but unbowed.

With the benefit of hindsight, this was clearly a mistake – given what has happened to Rec share prices in the meantime, and the way Welsh wasted cash on other diversifications. But for Swalec, the first ever approach to a Rec did have a salutary effect. It concentrated on raising efficiency and shareholder value. Though its hilly territory brings high costs that look poor in the league tables, in efficiency improvements and share price performance Swalec has been one of the best in the sector. Welsh has had to offer a top price to secure agreement.

Andrew Walker, the chief executive who leaves with a payoff worth nearly £1,000 a day for his two year tenure, will no doubt be crucified as a fat cat, but for shareholders he has earned every penny and more. Welsh will become the second combined electricity and water utility to emerge this year, and can claim to have thought of the idea well before North West Water, the empire builders of Warrington.

The parallel suggests that there is no case for a monopolies reference, though in fairness Welsh really ought to change its articles, which currently ban holdings above 15 per cent.

The financial gains from higher gearing and tax efficiency are unarguable benefits for Welsh shareholders. The jury is out on the claimed operational efficiencies though the plans, on first exposure yesterday, sounded as if they had more bite in them than North West's.

Swalec shareholders can meanwhile say yes to a decent offer and leave somebody else to worry about whether it works. There is a slight bitter taste for small shareholders, which Swalec has in spades. Swalec's previously announced £1 a share special dividend is to be included as part of the offer, giving tax exempt institutions a tax credit of another 25p a share. Once again, the exchequer is helping lubricate the wheels of a bid and underlining the point that these days, shareholders are a two class society.

1,600 Swalec staff to share £35m in takeover bonanza

PETER RODGERS
Business Editor

More than 1,600 staff at Swalec, the South Wales electricity distributor, will make a £21,000-a-head profit in a £35m bonanza on share options in the wake of yesterday's agreed £872m takeover by Welsh Water. But 900 jobs are likely to go.

Andrew Walker, chief executive of Swalec, will quit with a payout expected to be around £700,000, in pay and options.

The agreed takeover deal, which will form Britain's second joint water and electricity utility, brings a £35m bonanza to members of Swalec's Share-savvy scheme.

Options become automatically exercisable after a takeover, though Welsh Water is expected to tell staff they can avoid a substantial tax liability by agreeing to transfer the Sharesave scheme to the new group. However, staff were yesterday far from overjoyed because the share options profits come as more job losses loom.

Before leaving London for Cardiff to brief staff, Mr Walker said they were "very disappointed" at the news of the

takeover, which came after Swalec's board fiercely rejected an informal offer of 916p a share last Thursday.

The company is expected to lose about 900 jobs in total from the 5,000 in the core water and electricity businesses, excluding offshoots such as contracting.

Of these, 600 are already planned to go from Swalec and back with another offer on Sunday morning of 940p a share – worth 965p to pension funds because of a tax rebate – with a cash alternative of 930p.

The offer is made after excluding the value of Welsh Water's National Grid shares, which are about to be handed back to shareholders and are worth 194p each to Swalec shareholders. Swalec shares closed at 925p, excluding the Grid.

Swalec shook hands on the deal at 9pm on Sunday and the formalities were completed at 2.30am yesterday morning. Mr Walker said the offer met his demand for a price "well north" of 900p to secure agreement.

He said he had been asked to leave by Welsh Water because there was no room for two chief executives.

protected one, Iain Evans, Welsh Water's chairman, said there would be no rebate for customers, but he promised that as cost savings came through the group would look at how to give them some of the benefit in price or extra investment.

The change of heart at Swalec came after Welsh came back with another offer on Sunday morning of 940p a share – worth 965p to pension funds because of a tax rebate – with a cash alternative of 930p.

The offer is made after excluding the value of Welsh Water's National Grid shares, which are about to be handed back to shareholders and are worth 194p each to Swalec shareholders. Swalec shares closed at 925p, excluding the Grid.

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He said he had been asked to leave by Welsh Water because there was no room for two chief executives.

Of tel turns screw on BT for cheaper calls



It's good to pay less: Bob Hoskins, the acceptable face of BT television advertising campaign, will have even more to talk about if Of tel's latest proposals are accepted

MARY FAGAN
Industrial Correspondent

Telephone charges for domestic consumers will fall in future under sweeping changes to BT's price controls proposed yesterday by Of tel, the industry regulator.

Of tel, which launched a consultation on what the new controls should be, plans to clamp down on BT's rate of return and also said the group must improve efficiency to match the best companies in the US.

The proposals prompted warnings from BT that demands for further sharp efficiency gains would present an "enormous challenge" and would result in further job losses. Peter McCarthy-Ward, price review director, said that simply to sustain the level of efficiency gains over recent years "we would need negative manpower". BT has shed 100,000 jobs over the past four years.

The changes proposed yesterday by Don Cruickshank, director-general of Of tel, include for the first time in 1997 an overall cap on the charges for BT's rivals to use its wires. At the same time the regulator will introduce a new cap for domestic consumers from mid-1997, replacing the existing control, which limits price increases to inflation minus 7.5 percentage points.

Mr Cruickshank said: "It will mean cheaper telephone calls for consumers but by how much we will not know until next June." BT must then agree the

new controls or be referred to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission.

He added: "We will take a very bullish view of BT's potential for efficiency improvements [in setting the caps]."

Mr Cruickshank also said that some services where there was competition, such as international calls, may be removed from the price control. Others, such as calls from BT telephones to mobiles, which carry a relatively high charge, may be included for the first time.

The regulator said the aim was to remove or reduce from BT's control formula services where competition was thriving while keeping a cap in areas where BT still dominated. Even where services are exempt from the cap Of tel is likely to maintain a basic inflation-linked "safeguard" for consumers.

Mr Cruickshank surprised BT by saying that in working out the exact controls he will use a lower rate of return than the 15 per cent assumed today. One City analyst said: "This is nasty for BT if you read the detail. Of tel is saying that BT's profit levels need to be lower or can be lower than they have ever said before. I would not accept this if I were BT."

Separately, Mr Cruickshank said prices for other operators to use BT wires would fall 20 per cent this year, backdated to April. Much of the reduction was due to a better allocation of costs following demands BT produce separate accounts for different parts of the business.

Acquisitions push S&N to 9% increase

JOHN SHEPHERD

Scottish & Newcastle Breweries, fresh from the £440m acquisition of Courage, unsettled investors yesterday with half-year pre-interest and pre-exceptional profits at the lower end of a wide range of analysts' expectations at £158.2m. Shares dropped 12p to 619p.

The result for the period to 29 October, which was a 9 per cent improvement on the comparable period, largely reflected the benefits of two acquisitions – the Chief & Brewer pub chain and Courage, which turned S&N from being into the fourth-largest brewer in the market, leader ahead of Bass.

Drinks analysts, however, said there were several encouraging aspects behind the results and viewed the share price fall as a knee-jerk reaction to an unexpected £80m reorganisation charge for a £70m asset write-down relating to Courage.

Only 11 weeks' figures from Courage, equating to an operating profit of £2m, were included in the results. This was better and expected, and analysts said demonstrated that S&N was continuing to gain market share in beer despite the natural problems of integrating the business.

Brian Stewart, chief executive of S&N, said Courage's volume beer sales rose 7 per cent compared with 1 per cent for the existing brewing business. The Courage performance led to an overall 4 per cent improvement in beer volumes compared with 3 per cent for the rest of the market.

The South benefited from the weather, giving a 1 to 2 per

cent lift in the market. The beer market was also growing before the summer, giving an underlying trend of growth," Mr Stewart said.

John Smith's bitter, part of the Courage brand stable, is now the country's best-selling ale, having recently overtaken Tetley bitter, which is owned by Carlsberg Tetley.

Mr Stewart said, however, that while progress had been made over the summer and autumn there were strong signs that there would again be a big fight for market share among the big brewers at Christmas. He said there would again be a generous offering of discounts. "I'm afraid the multi-buys are there in the pipeline."

While analysts were encouraged by the brewing and pub results, they were concerned by the unexpectedly flat performance by the leisure division – namely the Center Parcs and Pontins holiday businesses.

Operating profits from leisure operations rose 3.9 per cent to £50.9m. "Center Parcs turnover rose by 10 per cent but profits rose 4 to 5 per cent, held back by the costs of new Parcs coming on-stream and by the hot weather... which affected spending," Mr Stewart added. Results from Pontins were "broadly flat". The number of sites has been reduced from 23 to 19, and analysts believe that S&N will sell the business sooner rather than later. Mr Stewart declined to dismiss the notion that the business might be sold.

The interim dividend has been increased by 7.5 per cent to 6.55p.

Investment Column, page 22

The long and the short of it gives a new definition of hot money

The annual chilli competition at Bank of America reaches its gut-wrenching climax next week, prompting much concern and duodenal rumbling among the participating derivatives boys. The results are due to be announced on 14 December and will be followed by the traditional mass ingestion of the fiery commodity.

For a financial contribution into the pot (most of which goes to charity) the participants are given a notional £3m to invest on three different derivatives products. The individual performances are measured over a number of weeks, with the deadline arriving on Thursday week.

The one who makes the most

money and the runner-up will receive a financial reward. The rest of the contestants must eat raw chillies – in the strict order of their rankings in the competition. "This is where the skill comes in," said one trader. The third-placed contestant has first choice of up to 20 chillies which have been purchased for their individuality. Some are short and malevolent. Others are long and benign. Others are long and indecisively evil. The trick is to pick the right one. It is no good being fixed-income derivatives merchant at Bank of America if you don't know your chillies.

That said, there is usually little anyone can do for the

last-placed man who must reconcile himself for an afternoon with the fire bucket. On reflection Nick Leeson's six and a half years in Changi jail is looking lenient.

The sudden resignation of Sipko Huismans as chief executive of Courtaulds has posed nothing of a dilemma for the chemicals group over the BT Global Challenge – the round-the-world yacht race in which amateur sailors battle against the prevailing winds. Mr Huismans, a frightfully keen sailor, had already booked his berth on the Courtaulds boat for the New Zealand-to-Sydney leg. Alas, he will not be with the company. The New Zealand-to-Sydney leg, which starts on 9

February 1997, has already been dubbed "the chief exec's leg". The shortest passage, at just 1,230 miles, it is seen by the sponsors as a chance to take part without too many risks and without spending too much time away from the office. It should take about a week. Theoretically the berth could now go to Gordon Campbell, the new chief executive. But Mr Huismans, who owns a 46-foot, French-built Oceanis yacht, is no slouch on the high seas and could even help the Courtaulds boat.

Courtaulds adopts the racing line. The company, which today announces the Courtaulds Trophy for each individual leg, feels it safer to leave Mr Huismans' berth undisturbed.

Peter Morgan, chairman-designate of Swalec, formally agreed terms for the takeover of the south Wales electricity company by Welsh Water at 2.30 yesterday morning – and promptly signed away the job he will take up on 1 January. By his own calculations Mr Morgan, a former director-general of the Institute of Directors, will be in the job for about three days before he becomes redundant. He won't even make the first regular board meeting.

The betting is that Mark Andrews, the new senior partner at the solicitors Wilde Sapte will not be long in the job. So keen is the lawyer to play his French horn that he has taken to practising in the firm's underground car park.



With two electricity companies taken out in quick succession one can't be too careful. Our picture today shows Malcolm Chatwin (left), chief executive of Yorkshire Electricity, demonstrating his defence tactics in the event of a likely bid. Yorkshire claims that Mr Chatwin is merely promoting the company's sponsorship of the National Armisties Museum in Leeds. It depends whether you believe the man on the right to be Guy Wilson, Master of Armisties, or the head of one of Yorkshire's institutional investors.

CHRONOMAT

At a time when instruments unerringly cope with Mach 2 flight data, continued improvements to the mechanical chronograph simply underline that there's more to time than technology. A movement's intricate beauty or a hand-polished case's lustrous gleam do put technological progress in a broader perspective. Like the *Cosmonaut*, the world's first but surely not last super-compact transport, Chronomats draw time and space over time with aesthetic excellence as well as outstanding technical performance.

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INSTRUMENTS FOR PROFESSIONALS

market report/shares

TAKING STOCK

Ladbroke puts in gallop on talks that Bass is fishing

DATA BANK	
FTSE 100	3,669.7
FTSE 250	3,369.1
FTSE 350	1,847.9
SEAO VOLUME	699.9m shares
25.2% bargains	
Gifts Index	95.35
0.030	
SHARE SPOTLIGHT	
	

Ladbroke, the betting and hotel group, is the latest tip for takeover action. In brisk trading the shares galloped 16p to 150p with Bass, the brewing giant which embraces the Holiday Inn hotel chain and Coral betting shops, rumoured as the potential bidder.

The Ladbroke excitement is a further indication that corporate activity, real or rumoured, is the dominant influence in the stock market.

The story that Bass, off 9p at 674p, will pounce has hurt since Granada's spectacular but not entirely surprising strike at the Forte catering and hotel group.

The Granada bid - and Forte's response - have highlighted what are seen as Ladbroke's hidden attractions. Two investment houses produced circulars outlining the group's worth to a predator.

Ladbroke shares were under pressure after it made a profit



MARKET REPORT
DEREK PAIN
Stock market reporter of the year

prize. If it did descend on the betting struggle it would probably have to be prepared to sell, or at least reduce, the resultant betting shops chain to meet monopoly objections.

Bass is due to roll out year's figures tomorrow when a Ladbroke bid could be announced. Its profits are likely to be around £592m against £555m. The rest of the market had a downbeat session although the FT-SE 100 index helped by New York, finished off its worst at 3,669.7 points, off 10.7.

Among drugs shares, British Biotech added 43p to 1,718p, Chiroscience 35p to 344p and Proteus 23p to 167p. BTG

other inhibiting influence. Cable gained 15p to 475p.

The big bid of the day was Welsh Water's offer for South Wales Electricity. The better-than-expected terms lifted Swalec 42p to 925p and brightened other electricity shares.

Shares with a French connection were under the whip of the country's industrial unrest. Euro Disney fell 15p to 153p; Eurotunnel 6p to 86p and Kingfisher 10p to 512p.

Racal Electronics gained 17p to 270p ahead of today's interim figures. It confirmed it was near to buying British Railway's telecommunications operation. Any deal could cost up to £150m.

Cookson, the conglomerate, was firm at 307p ahead of a Henderson Crosbie investment dinner. M&P, making a presentation today, rose 25p to 299p and Memory Corporation, was little changed at 442p.

Enterprise Oil rose 8p to 363p, helped by the former crude price and concern over Saudi Arabian oil supplies. British Petroleum improved 6p to 531p.

Profit caution from Williams Holdings left the shares 10p lower at 315p; Scottish & Newcastle dipped 12p to 617p on its figures.

Redland and RMC were ruffled by signs of economic contraction in Germany and BTR slipped 3p to 334p on fears of Australian selling. Lomro improved 4p to 172p on demerger speculation.

Pittards, the leather group, gained 8p to 57p on a £6.3m property sale and Psion, the computer group, jumped 67p to 860p following two crosses above the then market price.

Cortworth, the engineer, made a firm debut, trading at 155p against the 150p issue price. It was a buyout from Williams two years ago.

PEX, a struggling clothing group, has emerged as the UK vehicle for Italian businessman, Andrea Cattaneo Della Voita, who at one time had his eye on the Seet textile group. Through Unwear, a quoted Belgian group where he has a 39 per cent interest, he is planning up to a £2m injection into the company. Unwear is subscribing £1m for shares at 4.375p and underwriting a £1m placing and open offer at the same price. The shares held at 8.5p.

Upland International, the shipping group, rose 3p to 75p with Klearwort Benson forecasting 1996 profits of £2.45m or £4.26m, allowing for the £10m funding now under way. The extra cash will help the group extend its fleet: it is in talks to buy ships from the Norwegian Upland family, probably in exchange for shares.

BANKS, MERCHANT	
Barclays Bank	1,200.00
HSBC Bank	1,100.00
London & Lancashire	1,000.00
Midland Bank	900.00
Natwest Bank	800.00
Paragon Bank	700.00
Prudential	600.00
Royal Bank of Scotland	500.00
Santander	400.00
TSB Bank	300.00
Windsor Bank	200.00
Yorkshire Bank	100.00
BANKS, RETAIL	
Bank of Scotland	1,200.00
Bank of Wales	1,100.00
Bank of Ireland	1,000.00
Bank of Cyprus	900.00
Bank of Greece	800.00
Bank of Italy	700.00
Bank of Spain	600.00
Bank of France	500.00
Bank of Germany	400.00
Bank of Japan	300.00
Bank of Korea	200.00
Bank of China	100.00
BREWERIES	
Adnams	1,200.00
Beck's	1,100.00
Carlsberg	1,000.00
Heineken	900.00
Kaiser Brewery	800.00
Miller Brewery	700.00
Paulaner Brewery	600.00
Reinhold Brewery	500.00
St. Pauli Brewery	400.00
Thurn & Taxis	300.00
Wassermann Brewery	200.00
Wolfsberg Brewery	100.00
BUILDING/CONSTRUCTION	
Arcon	1,200.00
Barton	1,100.00
Bellway	1,000.00
Bovis Lend Lease	900.00
Canal	800.00
Chambers	700.00
Claydon	600.00
Colson	500.00
Costain	400.00
Crest Nicholson	300.00
David Wilson	200.00
Edwards	100.00
BUILDING MATERIALS	
Arcon	1,200.00
Barton	1,100.00
Bellway	1,000.00
Bovis Lend Lease	900.00
Canal	800.00
Chambers	700.00
Claydon	600.00
Colson	500.00
Costain	400.00
Crest Nicholson	300.00
David Wilson	200.00
Edwards	100.00
CHEMICALS	
Arcon	1,200.00
Barton	1,100.00
Bellway	1,000.00
Bovis Lend Lease	900.00
Canal	800.00
Chambers	700.00
Claydon	600.00
Colson	500.00
Costain	400.00
Crest Nicholson	300.00
David Wilson	200.00
Edwards	100.00
DISTRIBUTORS	
Arcon	1,200.00
Barton	1,100.00
Bellway	1,000.00
Bovis Lend Lease	900.00
Canal	800.00
Chambers	700.00
Claydon	600.00
Colson	500.00
Costain	400.00
Crest Nicholson	300.00
David Wilson	200.00
Edwards	100.00

DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS	
Adnams	1,200.00
Beck's	1,100.00
Carlsberg	1,000.00
Heineken	900.00
Kaiser Brewery	800.00
Miller Brewery	700.00
Paulaner Brewery	600.00
Reinhold Brewery	500.00
St. Pauli Brewery	400.00
Thurn & Taxis	300.00
Wassermann Brewery	200.00
Wolfsberg Brewery	100.00
ELECTRICITY	
Adnams	1,200.00
Beck's	1,100.00
Carlsberg	1,000.00
Heineken	900.00
Kaiser Brewery	800.00
Miller Brewery	700.00
Paulaner Brewery	600.00
Reinhold Brewery	500.00
St. Pauli Brewery	400.00
Thurn & Taxis	300.00
Wassermann Brewery	200.00
Wolfsberg Brewery	100.00
ELECTRONICS	
Adnams	1,200.00
Beck's	1,100.00
Carlsberg	1,000.00
Heineken	900.00
Kaiser Brewery	800.00
Miller Brewery	700.00
Paulaner Brewery	600.00
Reinhold Brewery	500.00
St. Pauli Brewery	400.00
Thurn & Taxis	300.00
Wassermann Brewery	200.00
Wolfsberg Brewery	100.00
ENGINEERING	
Adnams	1,200.00
Beck's	1,100.00
Carlsberg	1,000.00
Heineken	900.00
Kaiser Brewery	800.00
Miller Brewery	700.00
Paulaner Brewery	600.00
Reinhold Brewery	500.00
St. Pauli Brewery	400.00
Thurn & Taxis	300.00
Wassermann Brewery	200.00
Wolfsberg Brewery	100.00
ENGINEERING VEHICLES	
Adnams	1,200.00
Beck's	1,100.00
Carlsberg	1,000.00
Heineken	900.00
Kaiser Brewery	800.00
Miller Brewery	700.00
Paulaner Brewery	600.00
Reinhold Brewery	500.00
St. Pauli Brewery	400.00
Thurn & Taxis	300.00
Wassermann Brewery	200.00
Wolfsberg Brewery	100.00
EXTRACTIVE INDUSTRIES	
Adnams	1,200.00
Beck's	1,100.00
Carlsberg	1,000.00
Heineken	900.00
Kaiser Brewery	800.00
Miller Brewery	700.00
Paulaner Brewery	600.00
Reinhold Brewery	500.00
St. Pauli Brewery	400.00
Thurn & Taxis	300.00
Wassermann Brewery	200.00
Wolfsberg Brewery	100.00
FOOD MANUFACTURERS	
Adnams	1,200.00
Beck's	1,100.00
Carlsberg	1,000.00
Heineken	900.00
Kaiser Brewery	800.00
Miller Brewery	700.00
Paulaner Brewery	600.00
Reinhold Brewery	500.00
St. Pauli Brewery	400.00
Thurn & Taxis	300.00
Wassermann Brewery	200.00
Wolfsberg Brewery	100.00
GAS DISTRIBUTION	
Adnams	1,200.00
Beck's	1,100.00
Carlsberg	1,000.00
Heineken	900.00
Kaiser Brewery	800.00
Miller Brewery	700.00
Paulaner Brewery	600.00
Reinhold Brewery	500.00
St. Pauli Brewery	400.00
Thurn & Taxis	300.00
Wassermann Brewery	200.00
Wolfsberg Brewery	100.00
HEALTH CARE	
Adnams	1,200.00
Beck's	1,100.00
Carlsberg	1,000.00
Heineken	900.00
Kaiser Brewery	800.00
Miller Brewery	700.00
Paulaner Brewery	600.00
Reinhold Brewery	500.00
St. Pauli Brewery	400.00
Thurn & Taxis	300.00
Wassermann Brewery	200.00
Wolfsberg Brewery	100.00
HOUSEHOLD GOODS	
Adnams	1,200.00
Beck's	1,100.00
Carlsberg	1,000.00
Heineken	900.00
Kaiser Brewery	800.00
Miller Brewery	700.00
Paulaner Brewery	600.00
Reinhold Brewery	500.00
St. Pauli Brewery	400.00
Thurn & Taxis	300.00
Wassermann Brewery	200.00
Wolfsberg Brewery	100.00
INSURANCE	
Adnams	1,200.00
Beck's	1,100.00
Carlsberg	1,000.00
Heineken	900.00
Kaiser Brewery	800.00
Miller Brewery	700.00
Paulaner Brewery	600.00
Reinhold Brewery	500.00
St. Pauli Brewery	400.00
Thurn & Taxis	300.00
Wassermann Brewery	200.00
Wolfsberg Brewery	100.00
INTERNATIONALS	
Adnams	1,200.00
Beck's	1,100.00
Carlsberg	1,000.00
Heineken	900.00
Kaiser Brewery	800.00
Miller Brewery	700.00
Paulaner Brewery	600.00
Reinhold Brewery	500.00
St. Pauli Brewery	400.00
Thurn & Taxis	300.00
Wassermann Brewery	200.00
Wolfsberg Brewery	100.00
LIFE ASSURANCE	
Adnams	1,200.00
Beck's	1,100.00
Carlsberg	1,000.00
Heineken	900.00
Kaiser Brewery	800.00
Miller Brewery	700.00
Paulaner Brewery	600.00
Reinhold Brewery	500.00
St. Pauli Brewery	400.00
Thurn & Taxis	300.00
Wassermann Brewery	200.00
Wolfsberg Brewery	100.00
MEDIA	
Adnams	1,200.00
Beck's	1,100.00
Carlsberg	1,000.00
Heineken	900.00
Kaiser Brewery	800.00
Miller Brewery	700.00
Paulaner Brewery	600.00
Reinhold Brewery	500.00
St. Pauli Brewery	400.00
Thurn & Taxis	300.00
Wassermann Brewery	200.00
Wolfsberg Brewery	100.00
PROPERTY	
Adnams	1,200.00
Beck's	1,100.00
Carlsberg	1,000.00
Heineken	900.00
Kaiser Brewery	800.00
Miller Brewery	700.00
Paulaner Brewery	600.00
Reinhold Brewery	500.00
St. Pauli Brewery	400.00
Thurn & Taxis	300.00
Wassermann Brewery	200.00
Wolfsberg Brewery	100.00
SUPPORT SERVICES	
Adnams	1,200.00
Beck's	1,100.00
Carlsberg	1,000.00
Heineken	900.00
Kaiser Brewery	800.00
Miller Brewery	700.00
Paulaner Brewery	600.00
Reinhold Brewery	500.00
St. Pauli Brewery	400.00
Thurn & Taxis	300.00
Wassermann Brewery	200.00
Wolfsberg Brewery	100.00
TELECOMMUNICATIONS	
Adnams	1,200.00
Beck's	1,100.00
Carlsberg	1,000.00
Heineken	900.00
Kaiser Brewery	800.00
Miller Brewery	700.00
Paulaner Brewery	600.00
Reinhold Brewery	500.00
St. Pauli Brewery	400.00
Thurn & Taxis	300.00
Wassermann Brewery	200.00
Wolfsberg Brewery	100.00
TEXTILES & APPAREL	
Adnams	1,200.00
Beck's	1,100.00
Carlsberg	1,000.00
Heineken	900.00
Kaiser Brewery	800.00
Miller Brewery	700.00
Paulaner Brewery	600.00
Reinhold Brewery	500.00
St. Pauli Brewery	400.00
Thurn & Taxis	300.00
Wassermann Brewery	200.00
Wolfsberg Brewery	100.00
TOBACCO	
Adnams	1,200.00
Beck's	1,100.00
Carlsberg	1,000.00
Heineken	900.00
Kaiser Brewery	800.00
Miller Brewery	700.00
Paulaner Brewery	600.00
Reinhold Brewery	500.00
St. Pauli Brewery	400.00
Thurn & Taxis	300.00
Wassermann Brewery	200.00
Wolfsberg Brewery	100.00
TRANSPORT	
Adnams	1,200.00
Beck's	1,100.00
Carlsberg	1,000.00
Heineken	900.00
Kaiser Brewery	800.00
Miller Brewery	700.00
Paulaner Brewery	600.00
Reinhold Brewery	500.00
St. Pauli Brewery	400.00
Thurn & Taxis	300.00
Wassermann Brewery	200.00
Wolfsberg Brewery	100.00
WATER	
Adnams	1,200.00
Beck's	1,100.00
Carlsberg	1,000.00
Heineken	900.00
Kaiser Brewery	800.00
Miller Brewery	700.00
Paulaner Brewery	600.00
Reinhold Brewery	500.00
St. Pauli Brewery	400.00
Thurn & Taxis	300.00
Wassermann Brewery	200.00
Wolfsberg Brewery	100.00
RIGHTS ISSUES	
Adnams	1,200.00
Beck's	1,100.00
Carlsberg	1,000.00
Heineken	900.00
Kaiser Brewery	800.00
Miller Brewery	700.00
Paulaner Brewery	600.00
Reinhold Brewery	500.00
St. Pauli Brewery	400.00
Thurn & Taxis	300.00
Wassermann Brewery	200.00
Wolfsberg Brewery	100.00
RECENT ISSUES	
Adnams	1,200.00
Beck's	1,100.00
Carlsberg	1,000.00
Heineken	900.00
Kaiser Brewery	800.00
Miller Brewery	700.00
Paulaner Brewery	600.00
Reinhold Brewery	500.00
St. Pauli Brewery	400.00
Thurn & Taxis	300.00
Wassermann Brewery	200.00
Wolfsberg Brewery	100.00

INDEX-LINKED	
Adnams	1,200.00
Beck's	1,100.00
Carlsberg	1,000.00
Heineken	900.00
Kaiser Brewery	800.00
Miller Brewery	700.00
Paulaner Brewery	600.00
Reinhold Brewery	500.00
St. Pauli Brewery	400.00
Thurn & Taxis	300.00
Wassermann Brewery	200.00
Wolfsberg Brewery	100.00
SHORTS	
Adnams	1,200.00
Beck's	1,100.00
Carlsberg	1,000.00
Heineken	900.00
Kaiser Brewery	800.00
Miller Brewery	700.00
Paulaner Brewery	600.00
Reinhold Brewery	500.00
St. Pauli Brewery	400.00
Thurn & Taxis	300.00
Wassermann Brewery	200.00
Wolfsberg Brewery	100.00

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Foreign Exchange Rates

STERLING		DOLLAR		D-MARK
Country	Spot	1 month	3 months	Spot
US	183.04	183.04	183.00	08854
Canada	220.99	21.91	34.94	09495
France	220.94	21.94	34.99	10000
Germany	207.04	20.70	31.93	10500
Italy	214.99	21.49	32.99	11000
Japan	214.99	21.49	32.99	70228
ECU	199.92	19.99	29.92	09399
Belgium	463.49	46.34	69.49	20319
Netherlands	463.49	46.34	69.49	33799
Denmark	209.99	20.99	31.99	3399
Ireland	099.92	9.99	14.92	4699
Spain	222.94	22.29	33.94	5649
Switzerland	222.94	22.29	33.94	5649
Sweden	180.00	18.00	27.00	45709
Finland	180.00	18.00	27.00	45709
Portugal	180.00	18.00	27.00	45709
Greece	180.00	18.00	27.00	45709
South Africa	180.00	18.00	27.00	45709
India	180.00	18.00	27.00	45709
China	180.00	18.00	27.00	45709
Japan	180.00	18.00	27.00	45709
South Korea	180.00	18.00	27.00	45709
Philippines	180.00	18.00	27.00	45709
Indonesia	180.00	18.00	27.00	45709
Malaysia	180.00	18.00	27.00	45709
Thailand	180.00	18.00	27.00	45709
Singapore	180.00	18.00	27.00	45709
Brunei	180.00	18.00	27.00	45709
Myanmar	180.00	18.00	27.00	45709
Burma	180.00	18.00	27.00	45709
Cambodia	180.00	18.00	27.00	45709
Laos	180.00	18.00	27.00	45709
Sierra Leone	180.00	18.00	27.00	45709
Liberia	180.00	18.00	27.00	45709
Ivory Coast	180.00	18.00	27.00	45709
Ghana	180.00	18.00	27.00	45709
Senegal	180.00	18.00	27.00	45709
Mali	180.00	18.00	27.00	45709
Niger	180.00	18.00	27.00	45709
Chad	180.00	18.00	27.00	45709
Cameroon	180.00	18.00	27.00	45709
Cote d'Ivoire	180.00	18.00	27.00	45709
Guinea	180.00	18.00	27.00	45709
Sierra Leone	180.00	18.00	27.00	45709
Liberia	180.00	18.00	27.00	45709
Ivory Coast	180.00	18.00	27.00	45709
Ghana	180.00	18.00	27.00	45709
Senegal	180.00	18.00	27.00	45709
Mali	180.00	18.00	27.00	45709
Niger	180.00	18.00	27.00	45709
Chad	180.00	18.00	27.00	45709
Cameroon	180.00	18.00	27.00	45709
Cote d'Ivoire	180.00	18.00	27.00	45709
Guinea	180.00	18.00	27.00	45709
Sierra Leone	180.00	18.00	27.00	45709
Liberia	180.00	18.00	27.00	45709
Ivory Coast	180.00	18.00	27.00	45709
Ghana	180.00	18.00	27.00	45709
Senegal	180.00	18.00	27.00	45709
Mali	180.00	18.00	27.00	45709
Niger	180.00	18.00	27.00	45709
Chad	180.00	18.00	27.00	45709
Cameroon	180.00	18.00	27.00	45709
Cote d'Ivoire	180.00	18.00	27.00	45709
Guinea	180.00	18.00	27.00	45709
Sierra Leone	180.00	18.00	27.00	45709
Liberia	180.00	18.00	27.00	45709</

OTHER SPOT RATES			OTHER SPOT RATES		
Country	Starling	Dollar	Country	Starling	Dollar
Argentina	13886	60698	Chile	166201	167000
Australia	13398	70182	Colombia	53926	53926
Belgium	14520	70182	Costa Rica	50142	50142
Brazil	12700	12700	Cuba	133500	133500
Egypt	14520	5415	Paraguay	251172	251172
France	13397	6397	Peru	133500	133500
Germany	22228	22720	Portugal	701433	459503
Greece	13397	6397	Spain	50142	50142
India	13397	6397	Taiwan	412709	227304
Italy	13397	6397	Thailand	50142	50142
Japan	13397	6397	UAE	50142	50142

Tourist Rates

2 Days	2 Days	3 Days
Australia(Dollar)	2,050	2,300
Austria(Schilling)	14,000	16,000
Belgium(Franc)	43,300	50,000
Canada(Dollar)	2,000	2,300
Ceylon(Pound)	1,300	1,500
Denmark(Crown)	1,300	1,500
Holland(Guilder)	24,000	27,000
Finland(Markka)	6,400	7,300
France(Franc)	2,050	2,300
Germany(Mark)	2,050	2,300
Greenland(Krone)	300,000	340,000
Hong Kong(Dollar)	1,600	1,800
India(Rupee)	8,000	9,000
Japan(Yen)	240,000	270,000
Malaysia(Mal)	15,400	17,400
Malta(Lira)	10,000	11,000
Norway(Krone)	225,000	255,000
Portugal(Escudo)	84,000	96,000
Spain(Peseta)	162,000	182,000
Sweden(Krona)	6,400	7,300
Switzerland(Franc)	1,700	1,900
Turkey(Lira)	800,000	900,000
United States(Dollar)	1,500	1,700

Interest Rates

UK Base	6.75%	Germany Discount	3.50%	US Prime	8.75%	Japan Discount	6.50%
Forward		Current	5.50%	Libor	8.25%	Thailand Prime	
Interest rate	4.00%	Poland Prime	7.00%	Fixed Parcs	5.00%	Denmark Current	3.50%
Italy Discount	6.00%	Czechoslovakia	6.25%	10-Day Paper	12.5%	Switzerland	
Netherlands Advances	3.00%	Denmark	4.75%	Sweden Paper (90)	8.01%	Discount Lombard	4.00%

Bond Yields

Country	Yr	yield %	Yr	yield %	Country	Yr	yield %	Yr	yield %
UK	97	8.05	87/88	7.37	Netherlands	97	4.08	87-88	5.01
US	87/88	7.64	88/89	7.80	Spain	97	5.00	100/01	5.00
France	87/88	6.95	88/89	6.80	Italy	87/88	7.05	87/88	7.00
Germany	87/88	6.15	88/89	6.00	Belgium	77-85	5.50	87/88	5.00
Australia	75-86	4.90	87-88	6.00	Sweden	77-85	5.32	87-88	5.05
Switzerland	77-85	5.27	77/85	5.00	ECU	87/88	5.00	87/88	5.00

Source: OECD Markets Research
 Yields calculated on bond basis. *** Complete new benchmarks

Money Market Rates

	O/Night	7 Day	1 Month	3 Months	6 Months	1 Year
Interbank	8 7/8	8 7/8	8 5/8	8 1/2	8 1/4	8 1/4
Sterling Cds	-	-	8 1/4	8 1/4	8 1/4	8 1/4
Local Authority Dcp	8 1/4	8 1/4	8 1/4	8 1/4	8 1/4	8 1/4
Government Market Dcp	-	-	8 1/4	8 1/4	8 1/4	8 1/4
Treasury Bills (90d)	-	-	8 1/4	8 1/4	8 1/4	8 1/4
Dollar Cds	-	-	8 1/4	8 1/4	8 1/4	8 1/4
ECU Linked Dcp	-	-	8 1/4	8 1/4	8 1/4	8 1/4

Life Financial Futures					
Contract		Settlement price	High/Low for day	Est/Conts traded	Open interest
Long Oil	(Dec 05)	10-10	10-12	103-29	10285
German Bund	(Dec 05)	94-02	94-04	18026	17482
J&J Bond	(Dec 05)	122-25	122-20	13024	12910
Italian Bond	(Dec 05)	134-77	135-00	10450	10287
IM Sterling	(Dec 05)	85-33	85-26	18-30	12352
	(Mar 92)	86-28	86-33	18-30	8945
3M Euro	(Dec 05)	86-28	86-28	127-54	123630
3M Euro	(Mar 92)	86-23	86-24	97-37	127-54
ECU	(Dec 05)	94-43	94-48	94-43	1339
	(Mar 92)	94-38	94-37	94-43	1339
Oil 5yr	(Dec 05)	26-72	26-70	17000	17000
FRB 100	(Dec 05)	397-50	397-50	50-47	59545
FRB 100	(Dec 05)	397-50	397-50	50-47	59545
Caroline	(Dec 05)	39-40	39-40	21-40	21-40

Settlement price: 2666.6	closing offer price				Call/Put Total/voix
Series	3600	3680	3700	3750	
December	85/7	44/18	52/43	5/83	--
January	162/53	81/48	54/71	33/102	--
March	140/45	338/54	81/57	58/117	--
February	158/52	227/81	98/104	75/131	--

Commodities

INDUSTRIAL METALS - London Metal Exchange							
Shouse		Cash	3 mths	Volume	LME Stock	chg	
Alu	HS	16505-16515	1658-59	455025	559700	+ 2450	
Alu	HS	165-80	1658-58	1281	228700	+ 370	
Alu	Alloy A		1658-58	1281	228700	+ 370	
Copper		7625-7545	774-25	6708	152825	- 1800	
Nickel		7818-7800	8000-30	14575	49000	+ 342	
Lead		2025-2035	2025-35	6947	22600	+ 270	
Zinc		1016-13	1037-58	35357	38200	+ 270	
Refined Copper	DS		500	50			
Refined Nickel	DS		15000	10000			

Stock volumes & change in volume as at Friday 1 October

PRECIOUS METALS							
per 100 g	£	Coin	£	£	£	£	£
Platinum	4000	28685	Burmese	400	261	Kovlands	37780/346683
Palladium	3000	8455	Burmese	500	201	191	8094/94983
Gold	333	347	Burmese	25	103	87	40722/286723
White Spot	333	347	Burmese	500	201	191	8094/94983
Gold Bull	333	347	Burmese	500	201	191	8094/94983

Source: S&P

AGRICULTURAL									
Cucum		Caulif		Barley		Potatoes		Potatoes	
LCE	Shore	LCE	Shore	LCE	Shore	LCE	Shore	ATA	Gal/100kg
Jan	354	Nov	338	Nov	2760	Nov	2760	Nov	401
Mar	354	Jan	358	Jan	2626	Jan	2720	Jan	401
May	352	Mar	358	May	2610	May	3050	May	428
Vol	2,291	Vol	5,893	Vol	73	Vol	30,590	Vol	153
White Sugar		Raw Sugar		Freight		Wheat		Corn	
LCE	Shore	LCE	Shore	LCE	Shore/Lb/100kg	LCE	Shore	CBOT	100 Bushels
Nov	353.9	Jan	31.8	Nov	1958	Nov	328.0	H-L	Sold
Mar	343.0	Mar	3100	Dec	1918	Dec	328.0	Dec	321.50
May	343.0	May	3115	Jan	1915	Jan	328.0	Jan	317.50
Vol	1,414	Vol	8	Index:	1381	Vol	3400	3400	341.0

Other Soils (Agriculture)							Source: ORE
Nov	Milan (H ₂ O ₂)	Storero	1055	Jan	Soye Oil	FL/100kg	845
Jan/Feb	Cops (1)	Storero	920	Dec/Jan	Coconut Oil (1)	Storero	7300
Dec	Cotton (H ₂ O)	Ulsanoff	8276	Dec	Sunflower Oil	Storero	6000
Dec	Wool	Acorn	8900	Jan	Peanut Oil	FL/100kg	920
Dec	Rubber*	Walsingham	4655	Dec/Jan	Gourmand Oil	Storero	9950

*Other: Wheat/Gl₂ = may org. - *Phytolacca* = *Adiantum* - *PT* Europe = *Phytolacca* - *PT* Intermountain = *Phytolacca*

ENERGY		(1/10/92)		(2/10/92)		WTI		Products ↑		(2/10/92)	
Brent Crude		Gasol		Gasol		WTI		Products ↑		(2/10/92)	
1FE	1.50/pts	*chg	Yr ago	1FE	close	*chg	Jan	Open	Spot Off North West Europe		
Jan	1235	+180	91/92	Dec	12155	+325	Jan	1520	Landed Gasoline	124/175	
Feb	1203	+157	92/93	Jan	12150	+375	Feb	1520	Maheut Gasoline	124/155	
Mar	1180	+106	93/94	Feb	12175	+225	Mar	1500	EE Gasol	125/157	
Mar	12.112		37.74	Mar	30.475						

When \$2000 product day. Year ago prices show average for week. Source: KPS-Index of World Crops Report prices							
COMMODITY INDICES							
"BSC" Index	Base date	%pt	%Day Chg	Dec. Stat	%Yr chg	Year Ago	% Yr chg
Index	1970=100	187.0	+0.4	187.0	+4.8	181.8	+4.0
Agricultural	1970=100	272.84	+0.4	240.01	+4.8	220.28	+5.00
Energy	1965=100	62.00	+1.29	58.06	+47.2	56.00	+6.46
Industrial Metals	1970=100	106.8	+0.20	102.93	+0.44	102.06	+2.88
Foodstuffs	1970=100	102.08	+0.15	102.02	+2.27	101.91	+1.98
Precious Metals	1970=100	490.8	+0.8	492.21	+0.75	482.88	+1.65

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Condition	Control (%)	MCI (%)	AD (%)
A	~95	~85	~75
B	~90	~80	~70
C	~85	~75	~65
D	~95	~90	~85

صبرنا من الاجل

WAGLINE
FULL RESULTS SERVICE
0839-111 171

RESULTS
0839-111 171

COMMENTARY
0839-111 175

HUNT'DON 101 201 301
PLUMPTON 102 202 302
G'HOUNDS 122 222 422

Results of 20th June 1988
 1st place £100, 2nd £50, 3rd £25
 4th place £10, 5th £5, 6th £2

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sport

Procurator Fiscal's interventions are cause for concern

Scottish football is attracting increasing attention from the civil authorities, the latest intervention concerning Stewart McKimmie. The Procurator Fiscal's office in Glasgow confirmed yesterday that police have been instructed to supply information on the incident during Saturday's 1-0 Premier Division defeat at Partick that led to the Aberdeen captain being sent off for an alleged elbowing offence.

"We have asked the police to supply certain information on the Partick Thistle v Aberdeen match at the weekend" was all

a spokesman for the Procurator Fiscal's office in Glasgow would reveal on the beginnings of yet another investigation of an on-field incident.

The trend began with the Duncan Ferguson case, which saw a professional footballer sent to prison for the first time for his conduct during a match. Paul Gascoigne, Alan McLaren and John Brown of Rangers and Billy Dodds, the Aberdeen striker, are the subjects of a report being compiled for the Procurator Fiscal for Glasgow.

They are under investigation for incidents during the match

between their clubs at Ibrox last month, a game in which John Rowbottom, the referee issued no punishments but the Scottish Football Association subsequently suspended Gascoigne and Brown on the basis of the referee's supervisor's report.

However, the theory that the Procurator acted because the football authorities did not falls down now. McKimmie was sent off after his tangle with Partick's Callum Milne. He was fined by his club and will be suspended in line with SFA rules. The intervention of the Procurator, therefore, would suggest that he

David McKinney reports on external pressures being felt in Scottish football

feels football is incapable of adequately policing itself.

Ferguson, who had already been bound over to keep the peace, escaped punishment by the referee when he butted John McStay, yet there have been recent incidents on which the Procurator has turned a blind eye, leaving those involved in football with an uneasy feeling as they struggle to interpret the ground rules.

Several players were involved

in ugly scenes at the Junior Cup Final between Largs Thistle and Glenafton at Ibrox in 1994 and in August of that year Craig Levein and Graham Hogg of Hearts exchanged punches during a friendly against Raith Rovers at Stark's Park. There was no action taken against any player.

While the feeling of the Aberdeen people at Pittodrie is that the Procurator now has his foot in the door and will continue to

be involved in football matters, Tony Higgins, a former professional player and now secretary of the Scottish Professional Footballers' Association, is determined to establish the real position. "We have written to the Lord Advocate, via Brian Wilson MP, and have alerted our players to the increased involvement of the civil authorities in the game," he said. "In addition we will meet with the Managers and Coaches Association on Wednesday to discuss the issue but the message now seems to be that if events are reported they will be taken up."

"There is a new agenda now, so the players must do as much as they can while we would like clarification to establish where we stand because of the independent role of the Procurator Fiscal. This is a worrying trend because, although the game itself hasn't changed dramatically over the last 20 years, we have a new audience, and while no one would condone violent conduct we are seeing a proactive role from the Fiscal."

That new audience has the aid of the prying television eye, with controversial incidents dissected every weekend in the

country's living rooms. Now there is a danger that some people are looking to sanitise the game, which is embraced with as much passion and vigour in Scotland as anywhere in Europe.

A heavy-handed approach is cited as the reason Scottish clubs fail to make an impact in the European arena, but the evidence from overseas suggests others are applying British fitness to their undoubted skills. Yet nowhere in Europe are players becoming as fearful of being involved in a tangle with opponents as Scots are - and outside influences are to blame.

End of the dream for Maradona

Phil Davison in Buenos Aires finds the Boca Juniors love affair is turning sour

Diego Armando Maradona is not used to having six goals knocked in against his side. It's about as rare as his appearances at training.

It happened at the weekend, though, as Boca Juniors went down 6-4 to Racing Club in a vital league match that could end Boca's title hopes. The result knocked Boca off the top of the table, a point behind Velez Sarsfield with two games to play, and threatened to end the honeymoon between Maradona and the Boca fans.

For the first time, a few Boca fans joined in the rival supporters' taunts of "Maradona, your mother's shell" - a vulgar anatomical reference in Spanish - in the club's Bombonera stadium on Sunday night.

Bombonera means box of sweets, but the atmosphere quickly turned sour as 60,000 fans saw their team defeated in the 10-goal match.

"Symbol of Boca," was the headline in the daily *La Nacion* yesterday, next to a picture of a dejected Maradona. "He didn't train all week. He said he had flu, but he was well enough to attend a barbecue," the paper reported.

Since his return to Boca in September at the end of a 15-month ban for failing a dope test at last year's World Cup, the little man has not been out of the headlines. The working-class club from the Buenos Aires docks where the tango was born came up with some \$8m (£5.3m) for a 30-month contract. "God has given me to Boca," he said.

At the same time, they signed Maradona's international partner Claudio Caniggia, another player with a former cocaine problem, to form the "dream team". Despite Maradona's continued absence from training, things were going reasonably well until just before

kick-off on Sunday night. Boca had even voted in a new chairman minutes earlier, the motor industry mogul Mauricio Macri, who was expected to bring more sponsorship and more success next season.

But while Boca's captain, recently turned 35, was overweight, weary and lazy, a hungry Racing Club, themselves in third place in the league and still with a shot at the title, went on the rampage. Despite scoring a consolation penalty, for the dream team's captain it was a nightmare.

"We knew deep down we were letting the championship slip away," he said after the match. "Today, we surrendered the championship, but we will keep the faith."

Faith? More and more Boca fans are expressing the view that Maradona's latest hairstyle represents just what it looks like - a yellow streak.

More and more fans feel that his new hairstyle represents what it looks like - a yellow streak.

like - a yellow streak. It was supposed to parallel the yellow stripe across Boca's blue jersey. Legend has it the club chose the colours when someone saw the flag on a Swedish freighter docked in Boca harbour at the beginning of the century.

Maradona has gone missing several times in the last few months. "Donde está Diego?" (Where is Diego?) is perhaps the most common newspaper headline in Argentina. The last time - last month - he claimed he was depressed over the death of Sebastian Passarella, the teenage son of his former international team-mate and current Argentina manager, Daniel Passarella, in a car accident.

Inevitably, rumours are rife that he has returned to cocaine, which got him suspended while playing for Napoli in 1991 and arrested in Buenos Aires the following year. Until Sunday, Boca fans had given him the benefit of the doubt, hoping that magnetic left foot could do just



Grim determination: Diego Maradona (centre) cannot prevent defeat by Racing Club on Sunday

Photograph: AP

enough to bring them only their second championship since a young Maradona helped them win it in 1981.

As he continued to gain weight this year - "the ball's the one that keeps moving and doesn't go to 10 written on it," goes a local joke - he had a face-lift, or jowl-trim as he preferred to put it, because: "I want to look good for my wife."

She, the peroxide blonde Claudia who has stood by him through thick and thicker, re-

proached with a breast implant, leading Diego to tell reporters: "Sus tetas son barbas" (her tits are fantastic).

Tubby and unfit though he is, he still has the magic. It just comes in less frequent doses. A few days before the Racing Club game, I watched him against arch-rivals River Plate, in what they call the Super-Derby, at River's Monumental Stadium where Argentina won the dramatic 1978 World Cup final.

The atmosphere was almost as electric as in 1978, this time with River's red and white colours dominating as bombs, crackers, flares and sparklers went off and ticker tape and toilet rolls blocked out the sky.

The little man still had the ability to drift past three men without looking down at the ball, to the cheers of *los bosteros* (the pigshits), as Boca's fans call themselves to distinguish themselves from River's middle-

class support. And he almost scored with a 40-yard shot from close to the touchline with the goalkeeper off his line.

Most of their fans still hope Maradona can pull it off for Boca over the next two vital games. Their biggest fan, 60-year-old Jose Barrita, head of their fan club and known as *el abuelo* (the grandfather), will be watching on television. He is currently in jail in connection with the murder of two River fans near the Boca stadium.

Ferdinand's true grit

Les Ferdinand has scored 20 goals since his £6m move to Newcastle last summer - only six short of his previous best return with four months of the season still to run.

Ferdinand's success in the famous No 9 shirt is propelling Kevin Keegan's side towards their first championship since 1927 and they are determined not to let the chance slip as they did a year ago.

"People have said in the past that Newcastle haven't had the stamina to cope with it, but this season we have shown our re-

silience," Ferdinand said. "To win things you have got to pull the best out of each other. Perhaps we didn't do it against Wimbledon, but if we are going to win the championship we have to command the best from each other week in, week out."

Ferdinand scored twice and made the other in the 3-2 draw against the Dons on Sunday. "His performance was exceptional and he scored two great strikers' goals," Keegan said. "But his work all round of holding up the ball and helping out in defence was just outstanding."

McStay's dawn chorus

Celtic supporters were up before dawn yesterday to buy tickets for Paul McStay's testimonial match against Manchester United on 12 December.

"The first fans arrived at one o'clock in the morning," Peter McLean, a Celtic spokesman, said. "By 8.30am the queues were stretching down the street and that was still three hours before the tickets went on sale."

Celtic are hoping to be given the green light later this week to open a temporary stand at the currently two-sided ground to push the capacity for the game to over 37,000. With tickets priced at £12 for adults and £5 for children and OAPs, the Scottish international, who joined the club in February 1991, looks set to earn close to £400,000 from the match.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

It is no surprise to Johnny Metgod that his old club, Nottingham Forest, are already England's last standard bearers in Europe. "All the time I was in England, people were saying they would have to change or fall behind," the former Dutch international midfielder said. "Ten years later, they are saying the same thing."

Metgod, 37, spent three years at the City Ground, followed by a season with Tottenham, before returning to the Netherlands in 1988 to join Feyenoord, for whom he is now head of youth development. He lives in a village outside Rotterdam with his wife, Patsy, their son and two daughters.

"There is no reason why change should not happen. The kids here don't play in the streets any more, but we take them at six years old and create situations which are like playing in the streets. Each player gets a ball to work with and does nothing else. There is no point in asking a boy to pass the ball if he cannot control it."



Johnny Metgod

"This is where English football is lacking. Still there are players, centre-backs for example, big blokes full of character, but who seem to want to kick the ball as far away as they can, as if it frightens them."

Metgod stopped playing only two years ago, but says he now "thinks like a coach rather than a player," and wants to test himself at the highest level. "I need only one more qualification to be a head coach in the First Division here, but I wouldn't mind the chance to work in England if the right job came along."

Jon Culley

Forest worried by jobs and strikers

Apart from Brian Clough cutting a few supporters who had invaded the pitch, Nottingham Forest have rarely been associated with crowd trouble. However, they carry the English standard into Europe tonight hoping that their success has not attracted the wrong kind of fan.

Olympique Lyonnais, their opponents in tonight's UEFA Cup third round second leg, are expected to flout the regulations of the governing body of European football and sell tickets on the day of the match. Although this happened without problems in both Forest's previous European ties, in Malmo and Auxerre, Forest are aware that the risk increases in line with their profile.

"I am concerned," said Frank Clark, the Forest manager. "There might be a few national yobboes who decide to have a day trip and cause a bit of mayhem."

The club has done everything we can. We have taken names and addresses for each of the 1,000 tickets we have sold. But though UEFA would take that into account if anything happened, the stigma of trouble would still reflect badly upon the club. It certainly would not do English football any good."

Fortunately the police are yet to be dragged into the wave of strikes which are slowly paralysing France - although they may join in if they continue. Apart from the possibility of

Glenn Moore on tonight's challenge to the last British club left in Europe

the dispute spreading to the airports - and preventing their post-match return tonight - Forest are more worried about their four strikers than France's 8,000.

With Bryan Roy injured, Kevin Campbell ill, and Andrea Silenzi still struggling to find form, they are hoping Jason Lee will be fit enough to lead the attack. Lee has missed three games, including the first leg which Forest won 1-0, with a thigh injury. "He has a chance,"

said Clark last night, "it depends how he reacts to training."

Forest's progress has been characterised by defensive solidity - they have conceded two goals in five games - but Clark emphasised: "We are looking to score. If we get one they will have to score three and I cannot see them doing that."

Clark will not reveal his hand but Silenzi is only likely to play if Lee is unfit. Either Paul McGregor, who scored the first-leg winner, or Stephen Howe (who created it) may then be entrusted with the linking role. Neither has made half a dozen full appearances, but Clark said he was confident they could handle the occasion.

The French will be without Florent Laville, who is suspended after being dismissed at the City Ground. Eric Assadourian is expected to return to partner the impressive youngster, Florian Maurice, in attack.

Another tight match is envisaged. "I would like us to be entertaining and expansive but we will do whatever is required," Clark added. "The next round is not until March so if we get through we can put it on the back burner for a few months knowing it is something to look forward to."

If they do not, the European competitions will be devoid of British interest until August...

Roberts makes plea to McGhee

Iwan Roberts yesterday did his bit to prevent Mark McGhee leaving Leicester City for the vacant manager's chair at Wolves.

As training went on as usual in McGhee's absence at Filbert Street, the Leicester striker said: "It's a big chance to manage a club like Wolves but the only thing they have that's superior to Leicester is their stadium. On the field there's no comparison."

Despite McGhee, 38 yesterday, having indicated that he wants the job, Leicester have refused him permission to talk to Wolves. "I should have the right at least to hear what they have to say so that I can make my mind up," he said.

The Premier League has pledged to give "full and due consideration" to any proposal by Wimbledon - currently ground sharing with Crystal Palace - to move to Dublin.

The Football Association voiced its concern when the scheme was originally suggested, but Rick Parry, the Premier League chief executive, said yesterday: "If Wimbledon do come forward with a formal proposition we would give it full and due consideration, as we would any innovative proposal."

Alan Thompson, the Bolton midfielder, has been given a three-match ban after passing 21 disciplinary points.

French players suspended after failing drug tests

Three French players, including two internationals, have failed drug tests this season, the national federation said yesterday.

Claude Simonet, the federation president, confirmed reports in the sports daily *L'Equipe* about the three cases, but suggested so-called recreational drugs were involved and that there was no evidence to suggest players were trying to cheat.

Bordeaux's reserve goalkeeper, Franck Fontan, was suspended for two months on Thursday, but no action has yet been taken against the other two

players - Fabien Barthez and Stephane Paille - pending the results of B sample tests.

Simonet declined to say which drugs were involved. "There are two separate problems. There are players who try to enhance their performances and others who are victims of a habit of using banned substances," he said. "There is no widespread taking of performance-enhancing substances here. I don't think we are talking about cheats in these cases."

Barthez, who failed his test after a league match in Nantes

on 3 October, refused to comment. The Monaco goalkeeper, who won the European Cup with Marseille two years ago, is currently second choice behind Bernard Lama in the national team.

Paille, a much-travelled international striker who has played for Porto in Portugal and Servette in Switzerland, retired from the sport after failing a test on 23 September, following a Second Division game with Niort, but he told *L'Equipe* his retirement was due to serious personal problems.

Simonet said the B sample tests requested by both players had been taken and that the results were expected this week.

Fontan was found to be positive after the Bordeaux v Montpellier match on 22 September, when he was selected for a random test even though he was only on the substitutes' bench.

Alain Affolton, the Bordeaux president, said Fontan would not be paid for the two months of his suspension. "It's unacceptable," he said. "I take this very badly because when you're 21 and a professional, you

should be careful. By letting himself go at a party, he's penalised the team and damaged the reputation of the club."

Last year, another French player, Stephane Ziani of Bastia, was handed a one-month suspended ban after failing a drug test while playing for Nantes. Simonet said he was alarmed by the trend. "I think we're going to have to start a campaign to encourage players to protect their health," he said. "I'm giving this some thought. We'll tackle the problem in the new year."

case for moving Leonard to tight head and bringing in Graham Rowntree or even Kevin Yates on the other side. But with Clarke now assured of his favourite spot, the flankers are the worry.

I have never been able to understand why Wasps persist in playing Dagglioli at No 6. His speed, as he has shown in *Sevens* particularly, make him a natural No 7. I should have thought. Now it turns out that he wants to play No 8.

Happily, Robinson provided one more demonstration of the modern truth that in international rugby short flankers sink beneath the waves. I should bring in Dagglioli at No 7 and give another chance to Steve Ojomoh, who has never let England down, at No 6. But I do not expect

players are bound to be disappointed and can sympathise with them," Stan Bagshaw, the North team secretary, said.

Last night David Baldwin, the Sale lock, withdrew from the North team with a groin injury. Matthew Greenwood moved up from the back row into the place he reluctantly fills for Wasps, with Richard Arnold, Newcastle's New Zealander, coming into the back row.

Meanwhile Swansea play Castres, last season's French Championship runners-up in a critical European Cup game at St Helen's tonight and will go out of the inaugural competition if they lose. Injuries mean the

[illegible]

Warrington's Gareth Davies, who has replaced Jonathan Davies in the centre following his return to South Wales, fractured his cheekbone during the defeat by Sheffield Eagles on Monday and will be out for the rest of the season.

Salford, Oldham and Widnes have all shown interest in the Hull prop, Tim Street, who is transferred at £80,000. The only solid offer for the much-travelled forward has come from Chorley.

Hull say that it could be as early as a fortnight before they announce their new coach, despite reports in Australia that the former Australian Test full-back, Phil Siesworth has got the job.

Having torn apart Nottingham Panthers to win the Benson & Hedges Cup 5-2, Sheffield Steelers gave a repeat performance in the Premier Division against Slough Jets with a 14-3 win on Sunday.

Panthers, in contrast, seemed sluggish, letting a 3-1 lead against Fife Flyers slip to end in a 7-7 draw. The weekend's surprise result came from Milton Keynes Kings, who held Sheffield 3-2 last week, drew 6-6 in a thrilling game with Durham.

The team said that defaults on sponsorship payments left them in an untenable position and that they would not be able to produce the competitive package to overcome new qualifying rules.

Keith Wiggins, the managing director, said: "We have tried very hard to establish our position in Formula One, but due to the difficult financial position, we have not been able to progress. Our cash flow and credit position have been stretched to a point where we feel we cannot continue."

Photograph: Reuters

thought by those smart chaps of the San Francisco sideline.

That caricature can be expected to make a comeback this week, as the Cowboy camp follows its streak to avoid losing to a side they outshine in terms of talent in just about every department.

Not that the result was a complete surprise. Nine weeks ago the Redskins became the first team to beat the Cowboys this year, a victory their head coach Norv Turner hoped would transform an ailing franchise. In fact the Redskins notched just one more win before travelling to Dallas on Sunday. Then history repeated itself.

Turner, who was the Cowboys' offensive co-ordinator as they won two Super Bowls, was credited with the victory. He was coached and used the same tricks again, devising a defensive strategy that thwarted the revered Cowboys offense, while his attacking unit created enough running room for Terry Allen to rush for 98 yards and a pair of touchdowns.

Hockey

HA CUP First-round draw: Beeston v Guildford; East Grinstead v Wimbledon; Farnham v Teddington; Havant v Epsom; Old Loughborough v Tring; Richmond v Reading; Slough v Canterbury; Southgate v Cannock (Ties to be played Sunday 21 Jan).

Ice hockey

BORGATE LEAGUE Premier Division (Standings): 1. Beeston 2. Durrant 3. Milton Keynes 4. Pile 5. Nottingham 6. Humberstone 9. Newcastle 8. Slough 3. Sheffield 14. First Division (Standings): Bracknell 8. Medway 3. Durness 16. Bideford 4. Muryfield 5. Blackdown 7. Pooley 8. Tetford 10. Peterborough 0 Manchester 7. Solihull 4. Chesham 4. Swindon 8. Guildford 3.

[illegible]

Squash

CLUB LA SANTA BRITISH UNDER-23 CHAMPIONSHIP (Nottingham, Sunday's Match's final: M. Pinner (Notch) vs N. Dutton (Black) 9-3 9-0

Swimming

Great Britain took two silver medals - Hertfordshire's Neil Wilson in the 100m backstroke and Neil Wilson of the City of London in the 500m freestyle. To doubt the British medals only on the final day of the World Short Course Championships in Rio de Janeiro on Sunday.

Tennis

Britain's Jamie Delgado, Nick Gould and Andrew Richardson, the three members of the LTA League squad formed a week ago under the American coach Peter Fleming, all won titles at the weekend. Delgado, 18, won on the UAE Satellite circuit in Dubai; Gould, 23, on the Portuguese Satellite Circuit in Faro; and Richardson, 21, won the doubles at the ATP Challenger in Slovenia with Mark Petchey.

Calls are charged at 39p per minute cheap rate, and 49p per minute at all other times.

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SPORT



MARADONA'S DREAM IS OVER

More and more fans feel that his new hairstyle represents what it does: a yellow streak. Phil Davison on the decline and fall of a legend

645 minutes, 492 balls, 185 runs

Atherton's innings of his life saves England

Cricket

MARTIN JOHNSON reports from Johannesburg South Africa 332 and 346-9 dec England 200 and 351-5 Match drawn

Before this tour is out, Jack Russell is planning to take his pains and ease out to the old colonial garrison at Rorke's Drift, but as far as he and Michael Atherton are now concerned, they have already been there and picked up their VCs.

This was behind-the-sand-bag heroism on an epic scale, and it was just about possible to close your eyes yesterday and imagine Ivor Emmanuel in his tattered tunic, belting out a chorus of "Men of Harlech."

When Ted Dexter was the CO, he liked his men buttoned to the neck and clean-shaven, but if Atherton was grimy and bestubled last night, he could justifiably claim that his cheeks were baby-faced before he started batting.

Ten and three-quarter hours he held out after walking in to bat in an apparently hopeless cause on Monday morning, although even then it would not have been enough without Russell's four and a half hour support at the other end. All too often Atherton has led from the front, and then looked around to find no one behind him. But not this time.

Heaven only knows what a batsman thinks about for nearly 11 hours, but you got the impression that it was neither his girlfriend's impending arrival, nor what he was going to have for dinner. Atherton's face was so screwed up in concentration it looked like a road map, and it was one of the finest rear-guard innings that can ever have been played.

You would have given Lucifer's cat more of a chance than England yesterday morning, setting off as they did from 167

for 4, with the remaining six hours on the clock of far greater relevance than scoring another 312 runs. However, while 14,000 people turned up at the start anticipating celebrating victory in this second Test sometime before lighting the lunchtime barbeques, most of them had trudged home long before South Africa finally threw in the towel.

England, scarcely surprisingly, needed a certain amount of luck to survive, and by no means the least important factor was the pitch - despite its movable cracks - did not misbehave anything like as badly as expected after that first morning cock-up over the toss.

Robin Smith had barely played himself back in yesterday morning when he survived a huge appeal for a catch behind off Allan Donald, Atherton gave a sharp chance to short leg off Donald on 99, and Russell had been in less than half an hour for 5 when Meyrick Pringle spilled a routine return catch.

Russell then proceeded to drive the South Africans half-way up the wall with that uniquely ugly method of his. While Atherton played the game properly, with a bat apparently the width of a barn door, Russell did not give a hoot whether he used his equipment or not, and there were times when he appeared to be playing almost exclusively with the cheeks of his bottom.

Much more of Russell in this series, and the South Africans will be less in need of a physio than a psychiatrist. Peering square-eyed behind sunglasses and a visor, Russell sand-crabbed across the crease, brought out the shovel shot whether he intended to play the ball or not, and, as Atherton said, played every delivery as though his life depended on it.

The fact that scoring runs was not uppermost in their minds was pretty obvious from the statistics. Atherton failed to score off 385 of the 492 balls he faced, as did Russell from 221

of his 235. Even Trevor Bailey might have considered 104 balls for eight runs between lunch and tea a bit of a grind, and had Russell gone on to make a century at the rate he was going, he would have taken 16 and a half hours to get there.

It was perhaps ironic that in the midst of all this trench warfare, the only wicket to fall all day was to a full-blooded slash to third man by Smith. However, it is not easy to stop playing shots altogether even when you cannot realistically win, and some of Atherton's strokeplay was delightful to watch.

The opposition may not have thought so, judging from one or two pieces of dialogue going on out there, and neither did South Africa do themselves much credit by ignoring Atherton when he had been felled - misnooking - by Pringle, and had to call for a replacement helmet.

There is something in Atherton's make-up, though, which makes him all the more focused when the cricket is not too chivalrous. You could persuade a mule to budge more quickly when he is feeling bloody-minded, and, purely by example, is helping England get rid of the one basic flaw that has characterised their Test cricket in recent years. If you cannot win, don't lose.

Atherton was honest enough to admit that England had played "poorly" for four days, and would have to "sharpen up their act" if they were actually going to win matches rather than save them. "Putting South Africa in was the wrong decision," he said, "and I felt I probably owed the lads an innings after that."

His chairman, however, was so delighted with him that last night Atherton might have achieved something even more improbable than batting 10 and three-quarter hours, and had Raymond buy him a drink. Illingworth said: "It's not easy for a Yorkshire to say this about a Lancastrian, but it was one of the great innings of all time. This is a big up for us, and it's got to be a big down for South Africa."

South Africa, needless to say, did not quite see it that way. Hansie Cronje, their captain, described Atherton's innings as a "good knock", which was a bit like saying that Mozart knocked out the odd catchy tune, and said that his team were "not disappointed" at the outcome.

Atherton, though, is a man who looks at the enemy's expression rather than his dictionary, and Cronje's declaration of buoyancy did not quite square with a pair of eyes that looked as though they had spent several days on a fish-monger's slab.



Captain courageous: Michael Atherton acknowledges the applause of the Wanderers crowd yesterday after reaching his century Photograph: Rebecca Nader/PA

Friend and foe salute captain

Friend and foe joined forces last night to salute Mike Atherton after the England captain had produced one of the finest Test innings of all time.

Atherton, was at the crease for 15 minutes short of 11 hours while compiling his highest Test score to date. It earned a hug from Raymond Hingworth, although the manager - tongue in cheek - later insisted: "I just gave him a gentle handshake, that's all, but it was a tremendous performance by both Mike and Jack [Russell]."

Every member of the South African team trooped into the visitors' dressing-room to congratulate Atherton and his part-

ners, Russell. "Atherton's innings was one of the great rear-guard actions," Bob Woolmer, the South African coach, said. "Our bowlers performed magnificently, kept trying to the end, but you have to give him great credit."

Atherton looked as though he could have carried on all night if necessary. "I feel pretty fresh at the moment," he said. "The adrenalin flows when you are out there, but I expect I'll be tired later on."

"Jack and I just took it ball by ball, trying to give every delivery 100 per cent concentration. He's a player who's got immense concentration and he played every ball as though his life depended on it."

For Russell, in particular, defeat would have been almost too much to bear. The England wicketkeeper took part in a similar operation with Robin Smith against the West Indies in Barbados nearly six years ago which ended in failure.

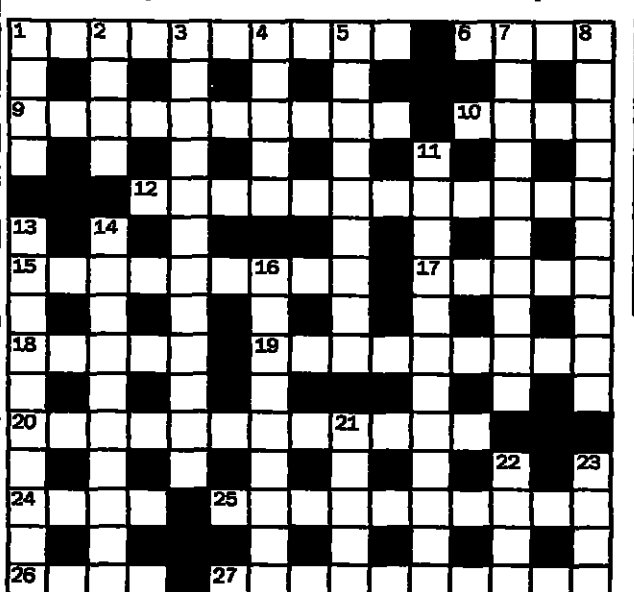
"I didn't want to go through what happened there again," Russell said. "We goed up each other and if one of us was looking a bit lazy we had a go at one another. We had a bit of luck, but we were determined to be there at the end. It's great to save the game from the position we were in."

Wanderers scoreboard

First day: England won toss	
SOUTH AFRICA - First innings 332 (8 overs 110; D J Cullinan 66; D G Coetzee 54; D E Malan 4-84)	
ENGLAND - First innings 290 (8 A Smith 52)	
SOUTH AFRICA - Second innings 346-9 dec (8 M Makhisen 100; D J Cullinan 61; J N Rhodes 57; D G Coetzee 4-78)	
ENGLAND - Second innings (Overnight: 167-4)	
M A Atherton not out	185
Russell 185	185
A J Stewart 38	38
88 min, 78 balls, 4 fours	
M R Ramchandani 0	0
12 min, 2 balls	
G P Thorpe 17	17
22 min, 34 balls, 2 fours	
A H Hick 4	4
13 min, 27 balls, 1 four	
R A Smith 44	44
133 min, 211 balls, 3 fours	
10 C Russell not out	39
27 min, 256 balls, 3 fours	
Extra 104, 107, 202	
Total (for 8, 645 mins, 185 overs)	351

THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

No. 2849, Tuesday 5 December By Andrew



- ACROSS
- Key match - for Joan, say? (5,5)
 - Idiot takes in nothing of TV programme (4)
 - Appropriate format for nocturne? (5,5)
 - Sound of a measure of noise on line (4)
 - We will graduate taking cut finely adjusted (4-8)
 - Contractors for Canary Wharf had this difficult task? (4,5)
 - Drab uniform colour (5)
 - Hiding place of endless prestige (5)
 - Beautifully a piece of wood according to verbal do's and don'ts (9)
 - The beginning of endless remark on building material (12)
 - One has point in rejecting European tip in outside cooking (4)
 - Sage's mode of existence? (6,4)
 - One refusing to strike has, in short, gone to advice given (4)
 - Don't try to use such an imprisoning (10)
- DOWN
- Liberal has abandoned the whip (4)
 - Boss dismisses one kitchen specialist (4)
 - Dear (7) means of getting into correspondence (6-6)
 - Showing no difference in the quality (5)
 - Rib broken by vehicle reversing up to taxi? Rubbish! (4-1-4)
 - Take too much money when about to replenish battery (10)
 - Thing for making foundations is stacked by the Thames? (4-6)
 - Sailor could be late on joining Navy, a will-o'-the-wisp (4-1-7)
 - Keep supply of diced things which cook needs? (5,5)
 - Transport lags behind in this (5,5)
 - The working out of a discount (9)
 - Tree in Burma pleases (5)
 - King cuts into pastry to find fish (4)
 - Abandoned socialist (4)

Other great rear-guard actions in Test history

1953 Watson and Bailey foil the Aussies

The obvious comparison to yesterday's events, England, batting again against Lindwall, Miller, Johnston and Bennett at Lord's, 340 behind, were 73 for 4 when Trevor Bailey joined Willie Watson at 12.42 on the last day. As a stand developed the nation stopped. Test Match Special, on radio, had an audience of Diana-like proportions. The pair defied Australia for almost five hours, Watson scoring 109, Bailey 71, until falling with 40 minutes remaining. England, though, were able to hang on with three wickets standing.

1974 Amiss makes 262 to deny West Indies

England were 230 behind when they started again against the West Indies at Sabie Park, Kingston, and in danger at 107 for 3. Dennis Amiss notched 570 minutes for his 262 run out in which he had invaluable help from No 10, Frank Williams, who scored four singles in 88 minutes. The West Indies had no time to cross a river.

1957 Cowdrey and May v Ramadhin and Valentine

The spell of West Indies' spinning magicians Sonny Ramadhin and Alf Valentine still transfixed England when, at Edgbaston, captain Peter May was joined by Colin Cowdrey in an historic partnership of 411 to secure a draw after England had batted again 288 behind. Ramadhin bowled a record 774 balls in the innings and was never again the invincible sorcerer.

1979 Gavaskar almost achieves the impossible

England, too, have been faced by a most testing batsman, Gavaskar, who scored 215 in 375 minutes against the West Indies at Lord's in 1979, perhaps the greatest all-rounder of modern times. He was 100 not out in 500 minutes. Gavaskar almost achieved the impossible, but was 100 not out in 500 minutes. Gavaskar almost achieved the impossible, but was 100 not out in 500 minutes.

Captains' innings for England

1921 Tennyson makes a single-handed defence

The Hon Lionel Tennyson, grandson of Victoria's Poet Laureate, captained Hampshire (where the wicketkeeper was his brother) and England in three matches in a stormy series against all-conquering Australia. He split his hand fielding at Leeds but insisted on batting at No 9, driving, one-handed, the thunderbolts of Jack Gregory and Ted McDonald, the Donald and Malcolm of their time, for an astonishing 63.

1933 Jardine battles against West Indies' bodyline

Douglas Jardine, the most courageous Test captain, led against a West Indies side set on giving England what Jardine had just given Australia: fast bodyline. Leslie Constantine and Henry Martindale, with a covey of close-leg bowlers, rattled the innings. Billy Tammy and retired with a cut chin; Jardine, cool and imperious, scored 127, in cap and pads, no helmet, no body guards.

Good-bye battery



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